

# THE LION COUCHANT

ARCHITECTURE OF THE ONTOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE OF LION MOUNTAIN

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DESIGN DISSERTATION APG5058S PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE (PROFESSIONAL) CHARLTON BOTHA BTHCH009 OCTOBER 2013

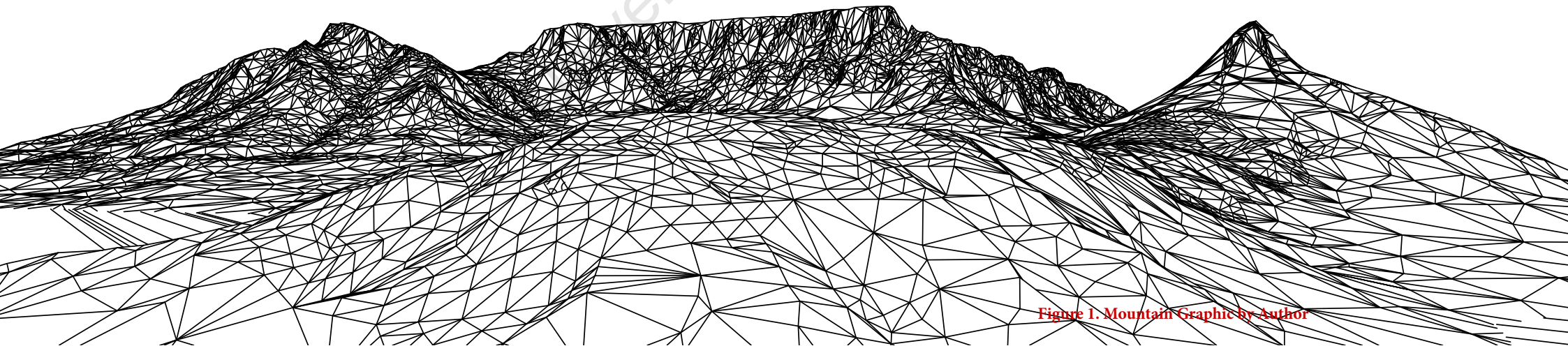


Figure 1. Mountain Graphic by Author

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# DISSERTATION NAME:

The Lion Couchant - Architecture of the Ontological Landscape of Lion Mountain

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is focussed on the natural and cultural landscape of the 'Lion Mountain', comprising of Signal Hill and Lion's Head, Cape Town. Based on the earlier theoretical analysis of reading place through a phenomenological approach to landscape of memory, as well the technological analysis of contemporary methods for architectural mapping, both studies serve as a pretext to the dissertation, in so far as to provide tools of engagement and interpretation of the study area to be identified as the "overall site". The resultant findings uncover a rich, highly complex layering of place and the relationships that permeate the various stages of human inhabitation here. These findings provide the platform for tracing the present day evidence of their respective adaptations, and as such, identifies that the role of the landscape, primarily a seasonal place of recreation – in contemporary culture - dissolves within itself muted and often absent representations of its multifaceted history. Thus, the overriding architectural problem questions whether perhaps the true value of this landscape lie in its ability to be understood by its user as much as it is to be enjoyed, beyond its often chaotic usage.

The project challenges the customs of both historical narrative and active natural landscape as inherently separate archetypes and proposes the establishment of a framework upon which key significant elements of the narrative, spread across the broader landscape, get developed as a series of spatial episodes with unique supporting programs. The neutrality of everyday life is suggested as the common factor that brings these archetypes into discourse. A network of inter-leading routes then incorporates these interim destinations and their respective histories into a dynamic present. The architectural design of each of these destinations gets expressed through the intimacy of the sensuous qualities of the built fabric and the fragility of natural ecology and its temporal authority. At times delicate influence simply reinforces existing conditions, and at others more extensive persuasion is required to realise the special qualities of each location. Adaptive reuse plays as big a role with programming the existing as it does with modes of production – emphasizing the situatedness of place and experiential embodiment. Such valency in the proposal shifts the prominence of normative associations of "nature reserve" maintenance and management into qualitative public engagement at a much deeper level than what is presently experienced.

Figure 2. Table Mountain plaster cast model by Author





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Figure 3. Firefly sketch by Author



'The Lion Couchant', as Jesuit Mathematician, Pere Tachard recalls, approaching Table Bay onboard a shipping vessel circa 1688, refers to what is today commonly known as Lion's Head and Signal Hill. This speaks of a revered image of the animal traditionally regarded as the king of beasts and associated with notions of valour, nobility and royalty. (De Beer, 1987) The term derived from the Old French and later adapted by the Middle English, 'Couchant' is the adjective used to describe the animal's position lying down with its head raised. The traveller's description, however, speaks of another reality as it was perceived from a distance across the waters – calm, tranquil and content, amidst gale force winds and dense fog. This rhetoric offers one view into the theoretical background of this thesis work which approaches this very specific natural and cultural landscape located at Signal Hill and the surrounding slopes of Lion's Head.

My decision for a potential Master of Architecture (Prof) thesis swayed between the urban and natural contexts, although both offered equally intriguing platforms of engagement, the deciding factor for site choice was driven by one singular, minuscule creature – a 'Firefly'. My first and only experience of this magnificent natural phenomenon took place along the ridge of Signal Hill one still summer's evening in 2008. And as I reflected back on that place I once again became enveloped by its natural grandeur. The monolithic landforms that define the edges of the city and coast line, specifically Table Mountain flanked by Devil's Peak, Lion's Head and Signal Hill, have for centuries been identified as iconic symbols of the Cape. Table Mountain, having recently been voted as one of the new 'Seven Wonders of the World' according to public opinion polls, has itself attracted countless visitors to the summit over the centuries, eager for a very unique vantage point over the city and the surrounds. Upon deeper investigation of the source material, it quickly became evident that Lion's Head and Signal Hill, on the other hand, have played a highly significant role in the development of the Cape and its relationship to its diverse culture. However, in a state of physical decay and seasonal overuse, many significant parts of this complex terrain have been reduced to ruin or overrun by squalor. Reading and understanding this landscape, manifested under the authorship of many, presented the opportunity to discover truths about its history and value to present day inhabitants and suggested a narrative that is both respectful of cultural traditions whilst adhering to the normative utilities of management and control, so that both the natural and man-made are acknowledged and celebrated, without losing one at the expense of the other. Here the process mediates between the association of the world of thought and physical matter with the enduring atmosphere believed to compose of 'man' and the environment he inhabits. It is, thus, rooted in the experiential qualities of site – that as it was historically inhabited and appropriated at its most significant periods of history to what has become of it today.

## LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY

The first section of this report reflects on the history of the study area, related specifically to significant moments of human influence, in order to familiarise the reader with an adequate contextual reference. Thereafter, the initial theoretical and technological tracts of landscape phenomenology and mapping are employed as tools of interpretation that are utilized in order to draw from both the physical and temporal contexts 'taking and simultaneously giving measure to the site, and furthermore, alluding to its deeper generative prospects of symbolizing the remembered, imagined and contemplated' (Cosgrove, 1999). As constructed and drawn abstracts they have served as informed representations that harness a perception of the site, offering intuitive clues for the subsequent design development. The position is then taken to delineate which of the various adaptations of cultural and historical value draw primary focus for the purpose of realizing an architectural ideal. These have been identified as the sites of the summit of Signal Hill, the old Tamboerskloof military ammunitions magazine (often referred to among locals as the Tamboerskloof farm) bordering Bo-Kaap on the lower South Eastern slopes of Signal Hill, the more prominent of the old Gold Mines of the late nineteenth century located below the current parking area at the start of the Lion's Head trail along Signal Hill Road, the Islamic Tomb and Kramats on the ridge to the East of Lion's Head, and Maskew's Path that leads down toward Fresnaye. The juxtaposition of past and present as demonstrated herein, furthermore, raises the problem statement that is later to be engaged. Developing each of the significant episodes across the landscape is, ambitious to say the least, thus, at this stage the dissertation deals with the Signal Hill summit alone, acknowledging it as the backbone of the broader architectural project.

## READING BEYOND SITE

The second section of this report charts a course into developing an appropriate architectural agenda. As the maturing of earlier ideas, the focussed conceptual thinking draws on the cohesion of each of the individual sites as they come together as a broader landscape. Having identified a clear disjunction between the history and culture from the remnants that remain scattered, the project confronts the customs of these inherently dissimilar archetypes and proposes the establishment of a framework upon which the identified individual sites are designed as a series of spatial episodes, overlaid with unique supporting programs. These gestures are intentionally ambiguous and may well be understood and interpreted completely separate from the larger whole or as part of it. Their treatment as built forms and spatial arrangements are decidedly different from one another as a celebration of their particular heritage and anticipated program. The existing trails and jeep tracks on the mountainous surface and the establishment of new paths, where necessary, reorganize the user's experience, unifying a network of inter-leading routes that incorporates these interim

destinations into a dynamic present, to be traversed on foot or bicycle as is the norm, yet not nearly as extensively. This approach would rely greatly on the involvement of Table Mountain Nature Reserve as owners and primary stake holders.

In the third section, Carlos Scarpa's Brion Family Cemetery provides a critical reference as an architectural precedent. This project epitomizes the submissive qualities of built form to the authority of time and nature; the continuum of landscape and body in motion. His use of material and modes of construction provide extensive clues to the development of an architecture that similarly embraces its immediate physical surrounds and making space within it as part of its fabric. The writings of Alvar Aalto and Juhani Pallasmaa's 'Hapticity and Time' fittingly address the very nature of 'fragile architecture', asserting that material and surface considerations are similarly sympathetic toward the temporal nature of the built and natural fabrics. Throughout the design process their principal ideas of the human-material agenda is considered. With the episodic temperament of the design of the overall site and the meandering journeys that collect and disperse between them, Dimitris Pikionis' mid-century design of the Athenian pathways on the approach to the Acropolis offers significant insight into the phenomenological experience of the journey between nodes.

In the fourth and final section of the report, the architectural agenda concludes the expression of the earlier assessments, design with the intention of captivating the intimacy of the sensuous qualities of the built fabric and the fragility of natural ecology and its temporal authority. At times delicate influence simply enhances existing conditions, and at others more extensive persuasion is required to realise the special qualities of place. Adaptive reuse, thus, informs program as well as modes of production, emphasizing experiential embodiment. Such valency in the proposal shifts the prominence of normative associations of "nature reserve" maintenance and management, and the static commemoration of historicism, into qualitative public engagement at a much deeper level than what is presently experienced. Since the design process is ongoing and has much of its full development yet to be collated, I have employed a strategy of expressing the attitudes towards landscape - through larger intuitive responses to site conditions and specific reference to the historical fabric, and intend to see the overall development reach fruition come final presentation day.

PRECEDENT

DESIGN AGENDA

## LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY

### From San to Settler

What you people call your natural resources our people call our relatives. Oren Lyonsas quoted by (McDonough & Braungart, 2002).

A sobering thought. It almost certainly evokes a momentary pause; for personal reflection and introspection relating to one's own understanding of the human-nature relationship. Similar was the attitude of the indigenous Khoi and San tribes that inhabited the land in and around the Cape pre-colonization for nearly 1700 years. Theirs was a very different human-landscape relationship to western traditions pre- and post-industrialization. With a near kinship with the 'ecosystems', they depended largely on a natural order of things and a looked to the great landscape with reverence as spiritual place. By way of a nomadic livelihood meant that they were not rooted in one particular location, however, chose to operate in seasonal shifts between various regions – patterns of movement that took account not only of their own resilience, but also that of the productive land in order for rejuvenation to occur during periods of human absence. Climatic conditions and its effect on the Table Valley seem to have favoured their requirements for place making, with freshwater streams and the endemic vegetation readily available. In addition, settlement was most often limited to low lying areas, granting access to a maximum pool of productive land. Higher lying mountainous regions, like that of the 'Lion Mountain', are suggested to have held spiritual significance and cosmic reference within their beliefs. At the arrival of foreign colonists, however, the many layers of appropriation of the mountain left little account of the earlier indigenous presence. (Murray, 1964)



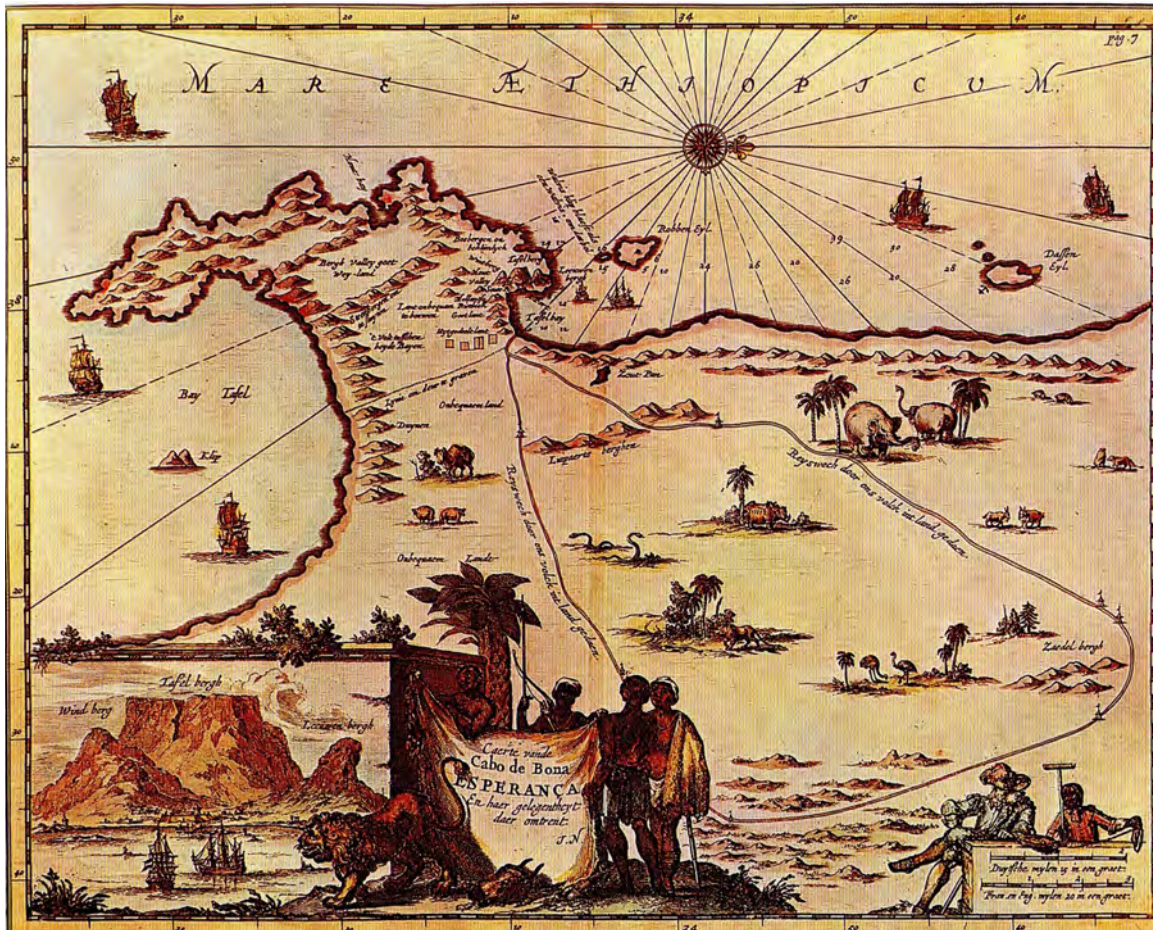


Figure 4. The map maker intentionally subverts the indigenous inhabitants, seeing the land as virgin territory. Private Collection, Cape Town

Figure 5. A depiction of the Cape as two separate worlds; that of the indigenous people and the European settlers. Museum Africa, Johannesburg



Figure 6. Map of the VOC's military structures at the Cape. University of Cape Town, African Studies Library



## Safety First

A different perception of the lay of the land, early colonialists identified the natural wall created by the mountain range for its defensive capabilities, likened to the less impressive manmade structures of historical European cities. The mountain range, valley and bay presented a series of natural features that were suited to control of military strategy. The route that was established from the main settlement in the valley across the saddle that is now known as Kloof Nek also provided suitable access to the 'Leeuwentkop , Leeuwenromp and Leeuwenstaart' – the elevated landscape above the coast and valley area that was later developed as signalling posts and lookouts. With the Liesbeek River Valley soon after confirmed to be agriculturally rich, these collective conveniences soon saw the Cape upgraded from outpost to colonial settlement. Much of what was believed of the natural productive conditions of the area for the indigenous people was also understood by the new inhabitants of the Cape. The economic power yielded from attaining this region specifically in the Dutch East India Company's global context meant that a steady system of management and strategy was to be applied if growth was to be maintained. Private land distribution took precedent on the eastern slopes of Lion's rump and Signal Hill, favoured over the western Atlantic facing portions. What is likely to have been true for the locals, here again saw little in the form of private claim, as the soil conditions proved to be poor for growing crops or depasturing livestock, fresh water was limited and north westerly gale force winds beat down with rain during winter months. The ridge line along Lion's rump and saddle even then seemed to define the distinctive character between the prevailing conditions on either side of the mountain. After all, other areas, including the Table Valley were already identified as suitable productive landscapes and appropriated as such. Further evidence suggested that policy prioritised the limitation of private development along the western slopes in favour of 'possible construction of unencumbered and unconstrained strategic defences'. (Todeschini, 1992) Such military intentions were only realised circa 1800 when technological advancements made it possible for canons to be placed and fired from the elevated slopes of the mountain.



## Keeping the Faith

As an established halfway station on Company's itinerary by late 17th century, the Cape already began to boast the diverse culture it celebrates so proudly today. One such dominant culture was that of the 'Malay'. Many of whom either arrived from the east or parts of Africa as slaves or were sold off as such. A notable figure, Sheik Joseph, a Prince of Bantam, is believed to have been sent here as an exiled prisoner for his ties to the resistance of the Company's expansion in Asia, and brought the Islamic Koran to Southern Africa. An interesting development in educational incentive saw the rapid increase of the 'Malay' population. It is suggested that 'slaves who had been christened and were able to make confessions of their faith, as well as speak or read the Dutch language...' could claim their freedom. Naturally, slave owners who would rather maintain tenure of their service, encouraged that the Islamic Faith be embraced among them instead, thus, ensuring their oppression. With development of the colony in the valley limited mainly to the low lying central area, the Malay slave community were marginalized along the outskirts on the eastern slopes of Signal Hill above the 'Old Hottentot' and 'Boeren Plein' (Riebeeck Square) to what we now know as Bo Kaap overlooking the valley. An Islamic leader among them, Hadjisha Mohammed prophesied 'that a day would come when a circle Kramats or Saints' Tombs would encircle the peninsula, and those living within the circle would forever be secure from famine or plague'. (De Beer, 1987) Beginning at the later Tana Baru cemetery



Figure 7. Islamic tombs and cemetery on Signal Hill. Western Cape Archives, E3928

Figure 8. Islamic tombs and cemetery on Signal Hill. Western Cape Archives, E9353

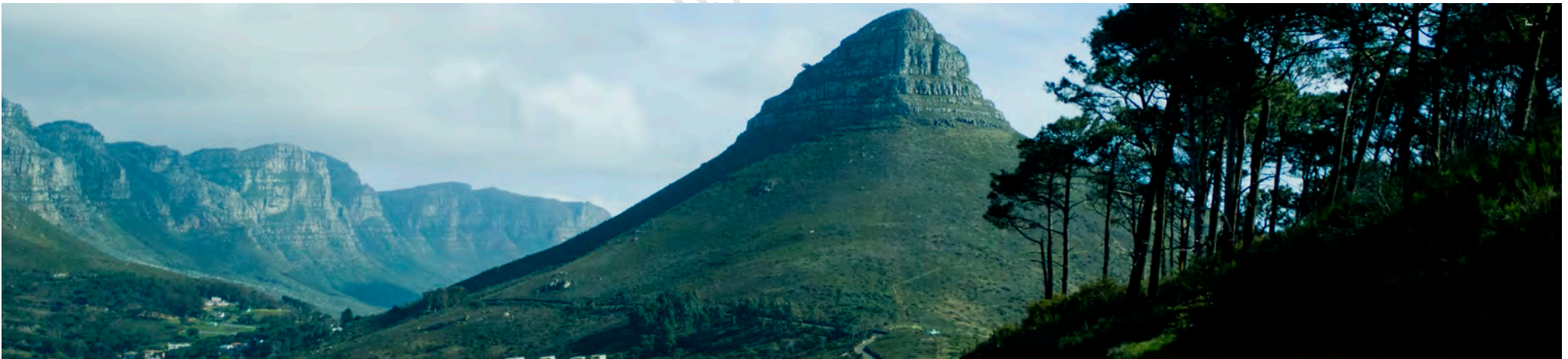
Figure 9. Islamic tombs and cemetery on Signal Hill. Western Cape Archives, E9354

Figure 10. Islamic Tomb below Lion's Head. Photograph by Author



and the two nearby graves at the top of Strand Street, the Circle of Islam extends to the three Tombs on Signal Hill, across the coast to a Kramat above Oudekraal after Bakoven, and around to Constantia, Faure and Robben Island. (De Beer, 1987)

The tombs on Signal Hill contain the remains of three key Islamic figures. The first, Tuan Guru, was responsible for establishing the first Mosque in the Cape in 1798. The second, Nurman (also known as 'Oupa Skaapie'), a reformed criminal, spent his years in a solitary hut on top of the hill caring for stray animals. He had also built a small dam for them near the hut. The precise date of his time spent there and the location and nature of these built structures, however, remains unclear from the research conducted. The third set of remains occupying the tomb is that of Said Aloewie. An uprising by the Islamic inhabitants of Bo Kaap came about circa 1880 when authorities closed the cemeteries at Signal Hill, which had at that stage reached capacity. These included the Kramats on the ridge, above the Strand Street quarry and in De Waterkant past Loader Street – the latter having been built over in following years (De Beer, 1987). Roughly 80 years later, the ridge again became a site of contention with uprising of a different nature. In the 1960's the area was utilized as space for peaceful protest against the apartheid driven Nationalist government. Members of the public of different faiths gathered in solidarity, holding vigils and fasting for the liberties of the nation – a highly significant moment in the country's complex political history. (Todeschini, 1992)



## Mine the Gap

It is well known that the South African mining industry flourished during the late 19th century through numerous mineral discoveries, particularly in the northern regions. However, in the many years preceding this period the Cape was hoped to have produced mineral interests. Gijsbert Heeck recorded the discovery of a silver metallic substance leading up toward Kloof Nek from the table basin by a Company soldier in 1654. The mineral was claimed to be of such insignificant quantity that further investigation was deemed unjustifiable. Abraham van Riebeeck, second son of Jan van Riebeeck, revisited the site in 1676 and yielded 'some good stones' (Hart, 1971).

Some affirm that there are gold mines on the Cape. They showed us stones found there that seem to confirm that opinion: for they are ponderous, and with a microscope one may discover on all sides small particles that look like gold (Tachard, 1688).

Upon investigating an opening formed during the construction of a road on the northern base of Lion's Head, PH Holeman reported in 1825, a supposed mineral discovery of 'metallic veins and ores', but later concluded doubtful that any value could be deducted of this find (De Beer, 1987). Yet still in 1886 a syndicate was formed to prospect for gold on Lion's Head, perhaps to the credit of recent discoveries in the Northern regions of Witwatersrand gold-fields. Doctor Paul Daniel Hahn, Jameson Professor of Chemistry at the South African College Chemical Laboratory, reported on 4 May 1887 that thirty-nine and a half grams of gold had been obtained from a sample of eight pounds of rock. He suggested that 'the contact-zone between granite and slate from Sea Point to the neck between Devil's Peak and Table Mountain is auriferous, and that gold will be found everywhere in this zone' (Argus, 1887). After the Cape Argus report depicted photographs of scores of would-be miners surrounding Lion's Head between Sea Point and Kloof Nek, Doctor Hahn was requested to point out the limits of the contact-zone, so as to avoid much unnecessary trauma to the landscape. Soon after, the Lion's Head (Cape Town) Gold Mining Company was established and by late 1887 mine shafts were sunk on the Cape Town and Sea Point slopes. It was declared that a certain degree



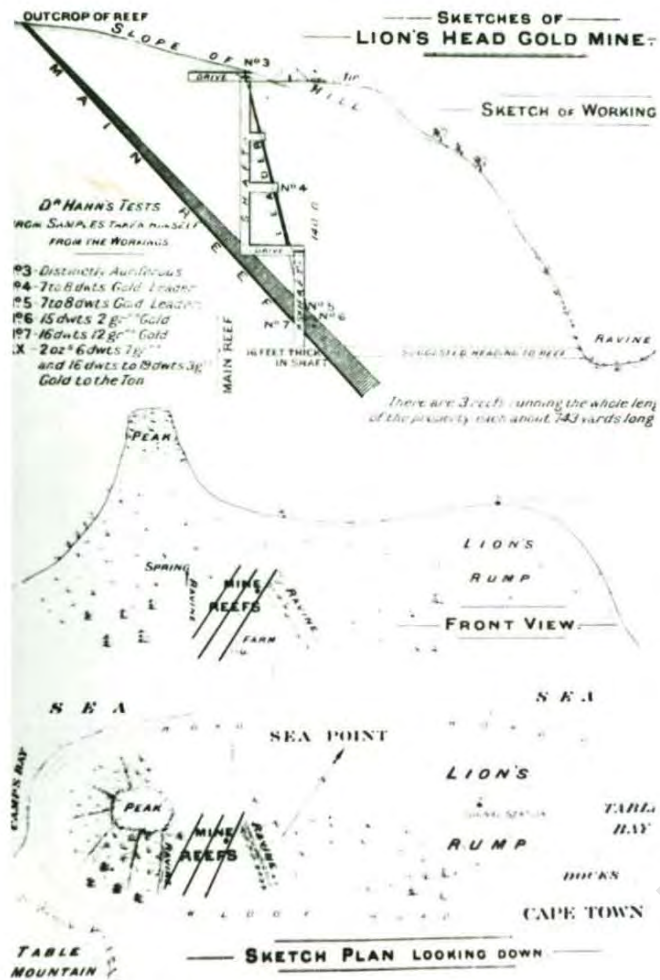


Figure 11. Sketch of Lion's Head Gold Mine. J10226

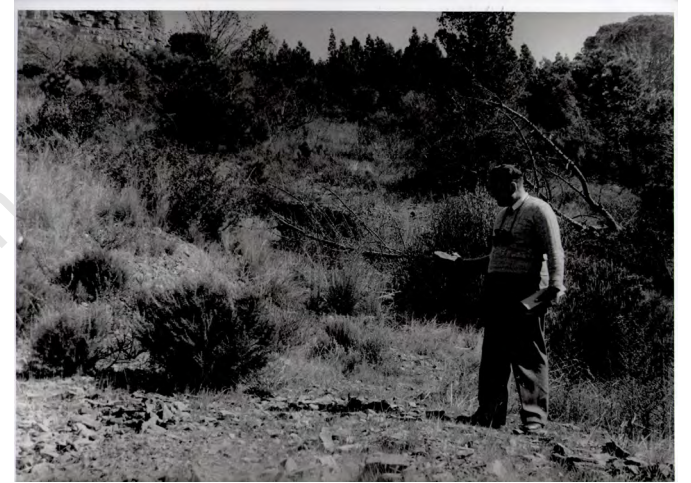


Figure 12. An unknown individual inspecting the Lion's Head  
Gold Mine site circa 1956. Western Cape Archives, Leica 1989/7  
Figure 13. Ibid  
Figure 14. Ibid

of pure gold was contained from the quartz retrieved by a local analyst, and a decision was taken to have several tons of quartz was collected and sealed for shipping to an independent firm of analysts in Germany. This seemed cause for much celebration, only to later be informed that not an atom of the valuable mineral was detected by the German firm. The syndicate was liquidated (Solomon, 1894). The coming years saw prospectors efforts redirected toward the Northern gold-fields and the mine shafts on the slopes of Lion's Head sealed shut.

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Figure 15. Original Flag Mast on Signal Hill. Western Cape Archives, 3563

Figure 16. Noon gun operations of Signal Hill, before the task was moved to Lion's Battery in 1902. Western Cape Archives, E3572

## Signal Operations

Isbrand Goske, who became governor of the Cape in 1673, declared that the summit of Lion's Head should be furnished with flagstaff and two guns operated by three men whose role would be to survey the Table Bay signal the number of arriving ships by firing the same number of shots (Hart, 1971). The formal signalling station at Lion's Rump (Signal Hill summit) was erected 1821, following the increase in shipping activity at the Cape and the establishment of mailing services and increased trade, which saw the signalling operations at Lion's Head become laborious (Mentzel, 1921). This was also the year that the commonly used Captain Marryatt's Code of Signals is adopted as the standard communication service (Anon., 1894). This was run by two signalmen who were also housed there with members of their families. Supplies were conveyed by wagon on a dirt track connected to other military sites and the town below via what may be the existing narrow dirt track on the eastern slope of the rump, past the later Lion's Battery (constructed in 1891, and is where the Noon Gun and Saluting Battery are still presently fired) and Tamboerskloof ammunitions magazine (constructed in 1893). After some time they had employed a system of rainwater collection off the roofs of their structures that was stored in a large tank sunken below the ground. It was 'with no small degree of pleasure that they handed to a visitor a glass of clear, cool water in the hot months of summer, even on this dry barren spot, elevated about 1200 feet' (Anon., 1873). It is worth mentioning that during the Anglo-Boer War, a guard of around fifteen men would gather on 'Hottentots Square' (today known as Riebeeck Square) march up past the magazine to mount guard at Lion's Head and the Signalling Station, suggesting that this route to the summit was favoured over the more tenuous alternative via Kloof Nek – the primary vehicular access route presently used. (De Beer, 1987)

A decision was taken in 1833 to provide ships in the bay with a universal time signal by which to synchronize their chronometers. This operation went as follows: at night a brass bell-mouthed pistol was fired into the air from the roof of the Observatory – namesake of the current suburb – and ships several kilometres off shore would monitor the activity via telescope. At noon a time-signal canon was fired from the Imhoff battery in front of the Castle of Good Hope (Green, 1966), and in 1854 by the suggestion of the Astronomer Royal, a repeating signal station was erected at Lion's Rump (Anon., 1854, p. 40). It was found that the 'time ball' at the observatory was invisible in sections of anchorage in the bay, and the following year a second was established at the Lion's Rump as well, 'so as to command sweep of the whole bay' (Anon.,

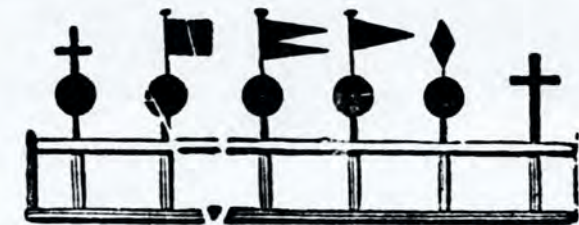
1854, p. 42). Governor of the Cape from 1861-1870, Sir Philip Wodehouse, made the signal gun in 1869. He conceded that the only gun fired at the Cape 'to which importance is attached, is connected with the Royal Observatory, and, is fired by means of an electrical apparatus and gives the exact time to the shipping as well as to the community. If that be of no use for military, I conclude we must pay for it' (Anon., 1869). Until 1903 the gun was fired every weekday at 6am and 9pm. From then on the noon firing shot was introduced at the introduction of Standard Time.

**MARRYATT'S CODE OF SIGNALS.**—Ships or vessels having Marryatt's Code of Signals can make their wishes known to their agents, in blowing weather, through the Port Office; and any assistance required will be strictly attended to, as far as practicable. Vessels not having the code can make the following with their ensigns:

- |  |   |                                      |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1st. Ensign in the fore topmast rigging. | } | I am in want of a cable.             |
| 2nd. Ensign in the main topmast rigging. |   | I am in want of an anchor.           |
| 3rd. Ensign in the fore rigging.         | } | I have parted a bower cable.         |
| 4th. Ensign in the main rigging.         |   | I am in want of an anchor and cable. |
| 5th. Whist where best seen.              | } | Send off a boat.                     |

#### Signals used on Lion's Rump.

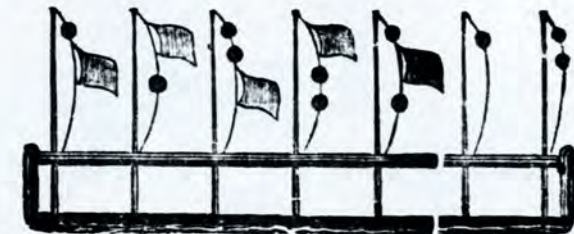
Scr.-Steamer. Ship. Bark. Brig. Schooner. Steamer.



Steamer

FROM

S.W. N.W. England. India. Australia. Natal. Algoa B.



Union Jack to be substituted for Red Flag for War Steamer.  
Telegraph alone for Mail Steamer from England.  
Telegraph and Ball for Overland Mail.

31. Marryatt's code of signals used on Lion's Rump. *General Directory and Guide Book for the Cape of Good Hope* 1870 p. 158

Figure 17. Marryatt's code of signals used at Signal Hill. General Directory and Guide book for the Cape of Good Hope, 1870





The site of Signal Hill was regarded, however less physically prominent than Lion's Head and Table Mountain, as an essential role player in operations of trade, commerce and also military, given its location. Captain Penfold, Port Captain and Dock Superintendent, had set to task of rebuilding the inadequate quarters for the signalmen into a substantial structure, including a look-out room as well. A new block-house was added in May 1894. At the turn of the century recreational use of the natural landscape became popular and by 1908 the 'Maskew's Path' was established, granting walkable access to the upper ridge of the saddle below Lion's head, connecting the western suburb to the summit. Today this path terminates at the old sandstone quarry at the top of Glen Garrif Road in Sea Point, which subsequently navigates straight down to the Sea Point Promenade at Rockland's Beach. In 1909 a new signal station was built in order to house increased staff, and was used until circa 1950, at which point wireless communication out ranged the visible signalling from the hill. The old masts were relocated to Port Nolloth to be used as danger signals on the bar (Anon., 1950)

It was not until the 1940's that private vehicular access had seen visitors to the ridge and hill summit along the road that linked back to Kloof Nek, and a part of the Signalling Station was converted into a small restaurant. Heightened military security come World War II, however, saw to it that all public access was prohibited. Another interesting detail regarding this period, was that the Signal Hill was the site of the first radar station outside of Britain, again reiterating the 'geographic and strategic significance of the Cape, and the Specific role of Lion Mountain in this'. These structures were demolished in the years that followed. (Todeschini, 1992)



**Figure 18. The last and most ambitious of the Signal Stations on Signal Hill, prior to its demolition Circa 1952. Western Cape Archives, AG13566**

**Figure 19. The North-Western flank of Signal Hill depicting a 'welcome' to on coming shipping vessels. Western Cape Archives, E5401**

**Figure 20. Celebrations on the slopes of Signal Hill for the British King's Birthday. Western Cape Archives, R1012**



## READING BEYOND SITE

### Mapping space

I think it is appropriate to challenge the hegemony of vision in the ocularcentrism of our culture. And I think we need to examine very critically the character of vision that predominates today in our world. We urgently need a diagnosis of the psychosocial pathology of everyday seeing – and a critical understanding of ourselves, as visionary beings. (Levin, 1993)

The illustration here, as is true for interpretations of my earlier theoretical constructs, asserts that the sensory engagement and reading place goes beyond the ocular bias. Embodiment extends itself beyond singular visual perception, but commands – voluntarily or otherwise – the active participation of all the senses. A heightened consciousness exists and cannot be ignored in day-to-day human-landscape relationships. The enticing opportunity herein would be to commit the agency of design to transcend its own finite order across the temporal, spatial and material landscape, encouraging an extension of this lived experience. (Derrida, 1997) As part of the introduction to his book, 'Mappings', Denis Cosgrove describes the simplicity of the act of mapping as the graphic register of correspondence between two spaces, whose explicit outcome is a space of representation. He continues breaking down its overriding premise to bring into union people, place. Cosgrove's assessment implicitly suggests that the ambiguity present in the act of mapping lays in its ability to be inclusive or exclusive, inductive or deductive, elemental or complete, tangible or abstract. He begins to articulate these polar distinctions as the coming to knowledge of the world, and the representations of its product to be the harnessing of the conscious and subconscious signifiers of spatializing that world. As an instrument of communication, he lauds mappings ability to be freed of the sense of dimensionality in its use,

outside of the limitations of photographic or pictorial depictions and narrative description, and associating its familiarity with its part in society as being naturalized, but not natural. The product of this inclusive and/or exclusive process, then, brings together the symbolism of its communication, often independent from theoretical or geographical reference, with the intention of concretizing the environment it serves to interpret, construct and realise (Cosgrove, 1999). The application of scale and frame in the mapping are brought into unity through projection, and their inhabitations of the conceptual language are characterized by the preference for code and choice. The differentiation of choice comes out of what Landscape Architect and theorist, James Corner, term's creating a field through processes of de-territorializing and re-territorializing space. This process is seen to be a way of using mapping as a collective enabling enterprise, for the purpose of uncovering both factual insight, as well as potential avenues of discovery.



**Figure 21. Constructed map imagining the habitation patterns of the firefly on Signal Hill, related to specific vegetation types. Model by Author**



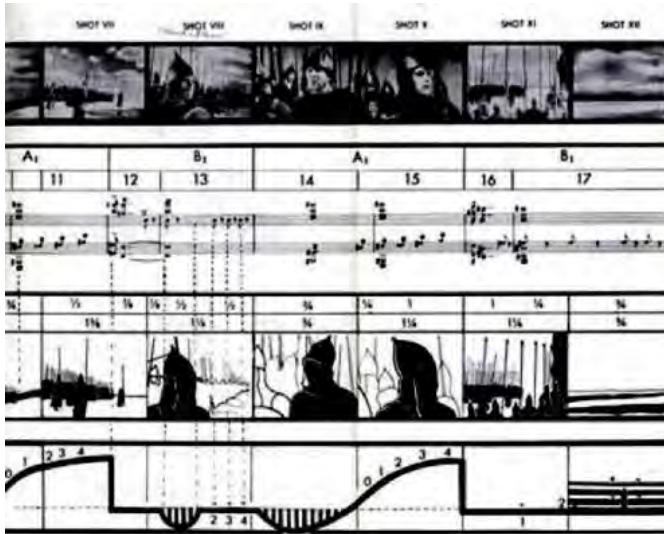


Figure 22. Sergi Eisenstein's 'Alexander Nevsky' score pattern study, demonstrating the close relationship between the sound track and on screen visuals. Secret Thesis, *Between Architecture and Film*, 2011

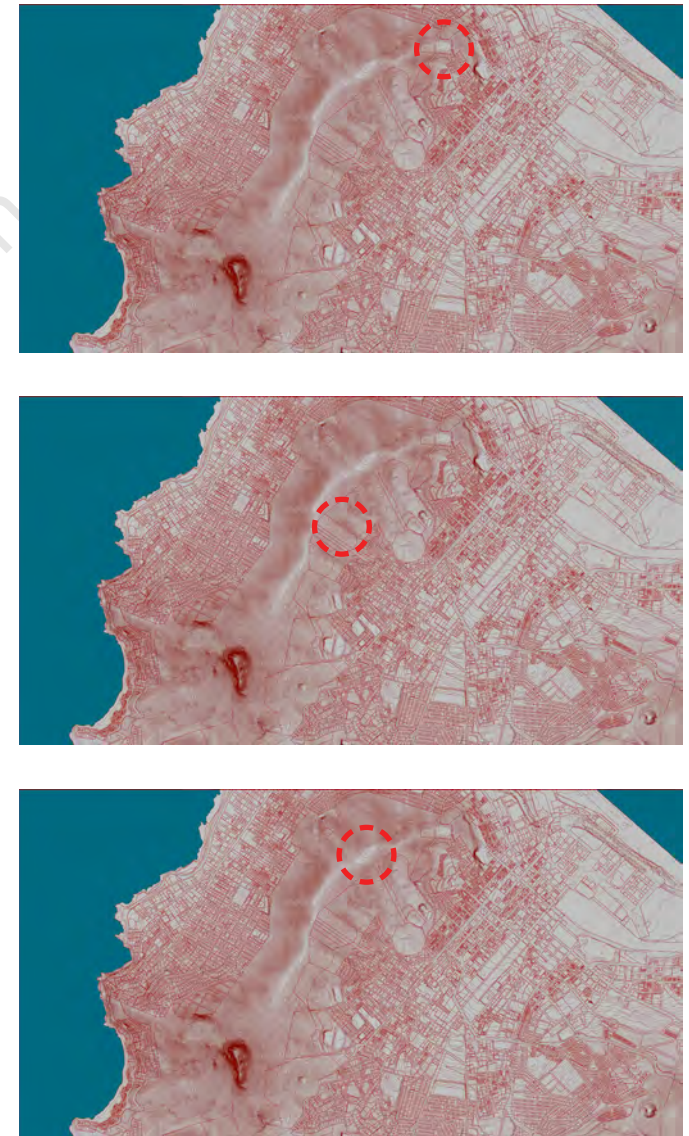
### 'Sitedness'

Two creative exercises commissioned by my thesis advisers in the beginning of this year called for an area familiar to me to be mapped and represented as though they were diagrams from Sergei Eisenstein's film storyboard for 'Alexander Nevsky'. The rules of mapping procedure demand an infinitely open-ended system, in order to foster continuous probabilities throughout. James Corner likens the 'Rhizomatic' mapping process to working with bits of 'found matter', similar to the work of collage, whereby acts of engagement and inventive discoveries are at the heart of the exercise. The contingent benefits of mapping, however, typically systemize its findings into measurable recorded bits of data. The resultant serves a more inclusive role as opposed the formal intentions of collage (Corner, 1999). Based on the earlier exercises, I had set out to complete a series of tasks to take place at various stages under considerably different conditions as an exploration of engagement. The purpose was to find a suitable manner by which to represent the sensual qualities of the landscape to the secondary reader and what these experiences may have embodied, encouraging their own prejudice and repository memories as the 'green screen' to their perception of the landscape.

The first of these took place on a still midweek afternoon standing nearby the noon gun at Lion's Battery in the preceding silent moments leading up to its firing. Here the soft ambient noise of the city in the distance suggests a sense of tranquillity to the context. Vague intermediate noises from the harbour and nearby traffic temporarily disturb the stillness. Then suddenly, the sharp contrast of the sound of the canon firing at noon, forces the mood of the scene into an abrupt collapse.

The second task took the form of a mountain biking expedition along the existing paths on the slopes of the mountain. Here the sharp jolts of contact as the wheels of the bicycle strike the surface of the dirt at random, leave disrupted tracks of dust and gravel in its wake and the sound of the wind cutting through the vents of my helmet. At one point the task takes a completely unanticipated turn, even for me, when I crashed off the single track that stretches across the upper ridge line of the Lion's saddle. Slightly disorientated and bruised, the personal embodiment of that location had certainly left a much more visceral repository memory for me, but added another dimension to understanding the terrain, and knowing when to proceed with caution.

The thirds and final task, urged on by the shear impulsive response to the weather conditions at the time, simply involved lingering around Signal Hill summit early one winter's evening as the wind and rain charged the landscape in a way that I would imagine is not commonly experienced - there was simply no one else there, since poor visibility and extreme weather conditions are deterrents to most visitors to the area. Here the chaos of the driving rain and wind transpose the focus of the landscape away from a controlled temperate environment that is ordinarily easily engaged, into an aggressive display of transformation. What is noteworthy of this experience was that the landscape itself appeared like an Island in the missed. Visibility was limited to approximately 50m ahead of me from any given point. The ordinarily expansive views extending beyond the horizon were diminished, and the sounds of urban live completely drowned out.



**Figure 23. Locations of audio mapping exercises. Drawing by Author**





Figure 24. The present day operation of the Noon Gun at Lion's Battery. Photograph by Author



Figure 25. Misty stone pine forest on the slopes of Signal Hill.  
Photograph by Author

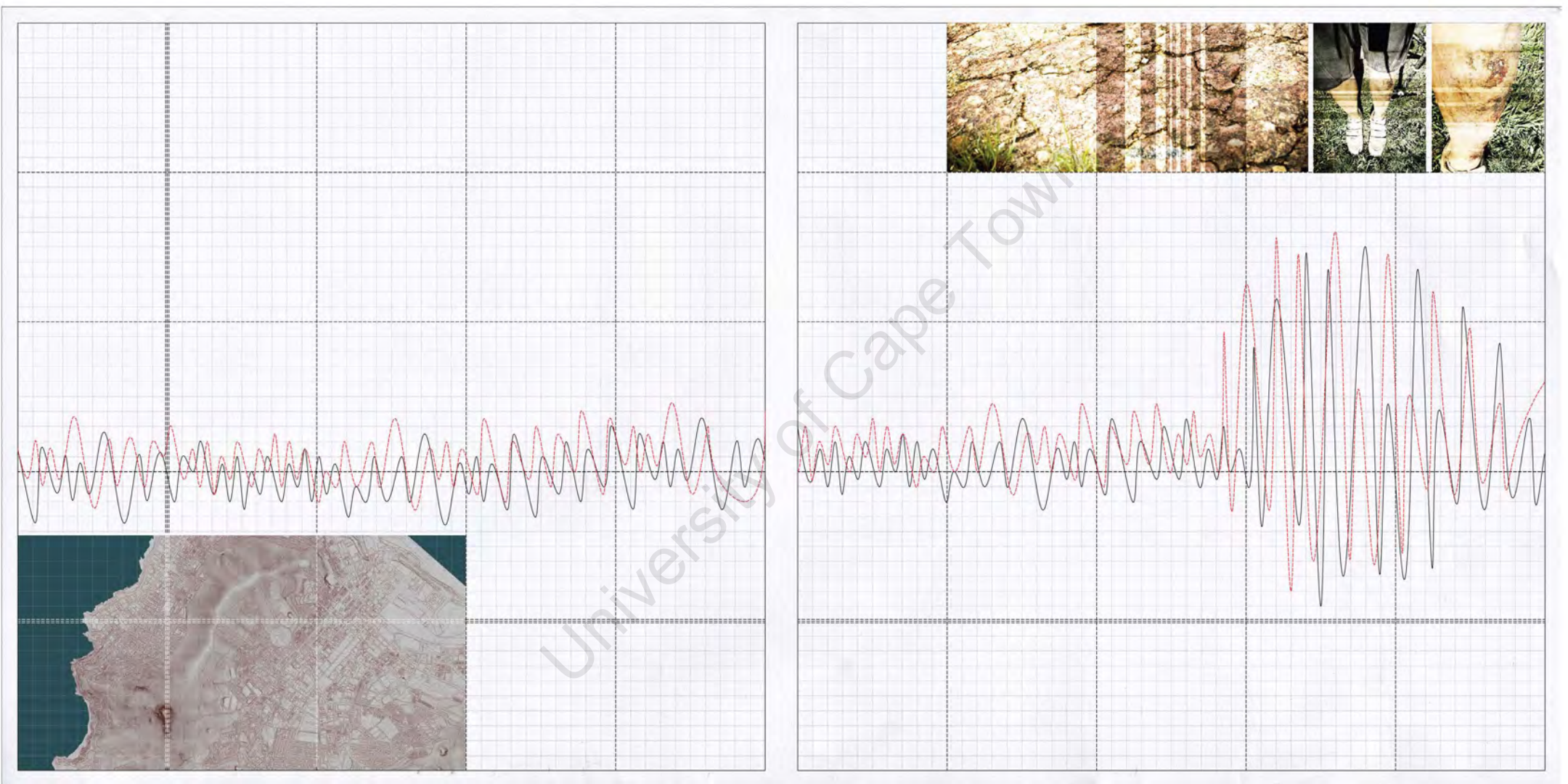
It is hard to deny that landscape exists as a phenomenon as an extension of our bodies, when by our own experience, we move through and gather intimate sensations that are affected by landscape (Aldred, 2012).

What is significant about each of these tasks becomes apparent in their representations, which subsequently were not ordinary visual projections. Photographs capture the physical composition, but lack the dynamism of landscape in motion. Video footage affords access to motion, yet still maintains a buffer limiting personal entry. Both limit the illustration to particular framing, not accounting for periphery events, tactile sensibilities or intimacy with the context. Thus, the primary medium for communication took the form of audio recordings instead. In doing this, the representation becomes explicitly reliant on the listener's full sensibility, with each task capturing a very specific audible quality. Based on what is then experienced through the audio mapping, the listener's perceptions are automatically geared toward their own personal cerebral reconstruction of a fictitious context.

At a later juncture I initiated a process of visualising the mountain biking incident's recorded data reinterpreted as a graphic mapping, referencing the techniques applied by Eisenstein in the way in which he draws parallels between film and score or sound track and whilst simultaneously attempting to generate a creative output as suggested by Corner's theory. The film classic, nearly 80 years post production, portrays real life events of Russian stalwart, Alexander Nevsky from the early thirteenth century, skilfully crafts a mould around the Stalinist administration within a hostile international political landscape. The director and score writer employed an unprecedented method for generating a sound track that quite literally mimicked the on screen visuals of each scene. This intricate deployment was intended to further dramatize the war-time epic as 'Form and Content: Practice – an interplay creating a Vertical Montage' as, described by the director himself. Thus, sound following sight. In the case of my exercise, however, this sequence was intentionally reversed. The disorientation that occurs through the disruptive imbalance of the initial recording permits a level of embodiment for the listener, not dissimilar to what I had experienced firsthand. This collaboration of sensory engagement refers to the specializations of the skin through all the senses – relations to tactility, as described by Juhani Pallasmaa. His view of this hapticity in architecture 'promotes slowness and intimacy, appreciated and comprehended gradually as images of the body and the skin. The architecture of the eye detaches and controls, whereas the haptic architecture engages and unites.'

Genuine architectural works, in my view, also evoke similar ideated tactile sensations which enhance our experience of ourselves. (Pallasmaa, 2000)





**Figure 26. Abstract visual representation of earlier mountain biking audio mapping. Model by Author**





Figure 27. Location of the Gold Mine. Drawing by Author

## Intrepid Exploration

The old gold mine appears as a natural basin or quarry on the south slope of Lion's Head below Signal Hill Road. The mining activity is not inherently obvious, as the shaft and drive had been sealed and the site overrun by vegetation over the years. Here all three major rock types from the broader land mass are haphazardly scattered around a fairly localized area. The scale and condition of the rocks and boulders varied; smaller rocks, roughly thirty centimetres in diameter lay packed in heaps between outcrops of fynbos. Larger boulders, however, are scattered uncharacteristically – granite, the upper-most geomorphologic mass of this area, interspersed between both sandstone and slate – show surface evidence of machining or tooling, delaminating and rotting in places.





**Figure 28. The state of the Gold Mine today. Photograph by  
Author**

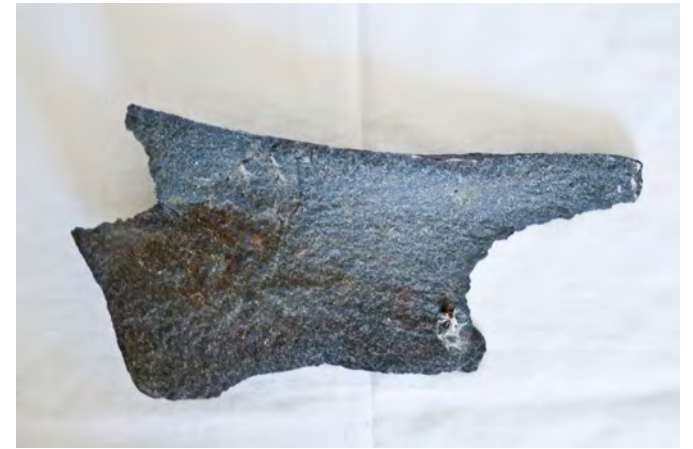




**Figure 29. Granite taken from the Gold Mine. Photograph by Author**



**Figure 30. Sandstone taken from the Gold Mine. Photograph by Author**



**Figure 31. Malmesbury Shale taken from the Gold Mine. Photograph by Author**





Figure 32. All three images depicting the continuation of natural life in the fragments left scarred by the mining activity. All Photographs by Author



At one point while perched on top of a boulder surveying the site, my attention was drawn down to the clumps of matter below my feet, where I had noticed between the bits of outgrowth and scattered rocks, voids and crevices roughly to the scale of the hand disappeared into darkness. Shining my torch into these spaces revealed nothing more than the same. The ambient noise around me was instantaneously drowned out by the deafening silence of the void below me. My skin, suddenly cold and taught, felt what my mind had realized may have been a thin surface layer of material covering a derelict pit or shaft. Nature's temporal progression conceded to find within the remnants, spaces, crevices and surfaces across scales inhabited my bits of plant and animal life, transcending the temporary interruptions of the mining activity. These existential microcosms differ significantly to the ideals of most modern architecture reliant on its purist representations of materiality and surface that only emphasizes the banal 'soporific uniformity of experience'. (Pallasmaa, 2000)

**Figure 33. Rotten granite boulder used to extract a core sample of the material for the purpose of closer inspection. The boulder was used to enclose the Mine Shaft Drive. Photograph by Author**







Figure 34. The core sample post extraction. Model by Author  
Figure 35. Tools of the trade – a make shift home tool kit to accomplish the core 'drilling'. Photograph by Author





Figure 36. Location of the Tamboerskloof Farm. Drawing by Author

A similar weekend visit to the old Tamboerskloof ammunitions magazine or Tamboerskloof Farm was conducted some weeks later. Having heard storeys in public of the criminal behaviour associated with this site, being posed as safe haven for petty offenders, I was somewhat apprehensive about going there. What I had discovered was something rather unique, special and in fact, the complete opposite of what had previously been expressed. I was received by openly by resident children, two dogs, a family of geese and a goat that seemed less than interested in anything other than scrap metal he had his sunken into. A subculture, inherently different from the immediate surrounds, almost entirely rural but not yet informal, that maintained a spiritedness to the way in which it 'lived'. The sites dominant history is caught between being realised as an actual farm portioned off by the company during the colonized period, and in the time of the first Anglo-Boer war, became part of military landscape developed by the English as an ammunitions magazine that would service the bunkers and batteries that were located around Signal Hill and Lion's head. For some time in its more recent history it served as a convenient dump site for neighbouring residents disposing from an array of household items to bits of building material. These activities have ceased significantly. At the lower end a portion if the land is occupied by South African Police Force's Mounted Police Unit. They keep their horses in an on-site stable and have setup temporary structures to accommodate their administrative functions. The farm mostly houses small single-parent families and a host of individuals that have previously found themselves on the outskirts of the city, having moved here with the intention of seeking employment opportunities within the city. However, it is the work of three individuals here that come to the fore.





Figure 37. Rooster at the Tamboerskloof Farm. Photograph by Author



Figure 38. The derelict ammunitions magazine, now housing a few informal residents from the farm, as well as a storage space for artists operating from the location. Photograph by Author





Figure 39. Entrance to the Nursery. Photograph by Author



Figure 40. The nursery. Photograph by Author

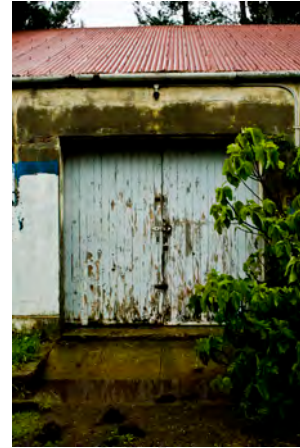


Figure 41. Old barn door on one remaining farm shed.  
Photograph by Author



Figure 42. Welcome sign above one artist's living quarters.  
Photograph by Author

The first is of a young gentleman whom I had only encountered briefly in passing. Along with some other residents, he established a productive nursery between an embankment and a dilapidated building. The structures are assembled almost purely from the rejected building material found at the entrance. Mesh fences and timber floor boards are erected as retaining structures to support new topsoil placed from propagating the land. Inside the ammunitions magazine building stands the work of two sculptors, that and Dirk Winterbach and Andre Laubscher. Their primary focus similarly seems to address the issue of the rejected matter imposed upon the farm by neighbouring residents. The waste resource becomes the mine for raw material. Even though formed out of decaying matter, Winterbach's 'human figures' seem energized with life, as he portrays them frozen mid-way through action. The only apparent newness about them is the binding wire used to hold them together. Other sculptures appear as protective masks and head gear and assemblages of bits of scrap that are formed to look as though it were hand gun, possess a sense of irony offset against the original program for which the magazine was intentioned. Both artists and others that have gone before seem to have identified the opportunity to capitalize on the use of the derelict space productively as is common among many creative individuals, writing in to it and incredibly fascinating episode in its life. Moreover, there close nit relationship with the subculture present on the farm speaks of a rootedness in the place that mediates between the utility of space and adaptive reuse, not only of product but of the existing structures as well.

In a recent article published in 'The Guardian', Charlotte Higgins writes about the increased UK and international trends for artists who find solace and retreat from busy cities, favouring the outskirts and country side. The tone in which the article is written makes it appear as if the primary shifts are associated with the increase of costs for artists to operate within the busy urban centres. Another suggestion supports the theory that international transformation within the art world across scales seems to be adopting and embracing contemporary folk culture, particularly within music. And an even further ideal – artists rely on the tranquil environment for inspiration, almost a return to classism, implying that the sense of slowness and embodiment sustained in these regions appear beneficial to the artist (Higgins, 2013). International formal arts movements and organizations such as Grizedale Arts, Hacker Farm and Pentabus Theater, are referenced therein. One particularly interesting common thread amongst them is the social responsibilities that they impart to the communities they inhabit. Artists are encouraged to become a part of the productive landscape, get involved with making and maintaining the livelihood of the establishment, rather than remain exclusive and self-serving.



Figure 43. A selection of artworks by Dirk Winterbach, artist currently living and working from the Tamboerskloof Farm. Photograph by Author





Figure 44. Time has not been kind to the surfaces of the building.  
Photographs by Author



## Taking Stock

When conceptualizing landscape and space, it is not something external and given for our apprehension; rather it is constituted, or formed, through our participation with things: material objects, images, values, cultural codes, places, cognitive schemata, events and maps (Corner, 1999).

As an imaginative inquiry, the rationale behind practice of mapping space relies on its ability to represent both material and abstract realities, whilst remaining neither imposing nor reproductive. It's overriding intentions, therefore, seeks to unlock the potential realization of previously obscured truths that act upon the space as it is continually worked into a series of iterative revelations of varied layers of content, each with fairly unique consequence. For example, prior to succeeding with his invention of the first commercially practical incandescent light, Thomas Edison tried and failed at near 3000 earlier attempts. He failed at realizing the complete product, but each one plaid an integral part in building up his collective knowledge;



Figure 45. Geological Stratification. Drawing by Author



Figure 46. Cultural and Historical nodes. Drawing by Author

each one a map or piece thereof, leading to the final product.

Mapping that does not succeed at revealing anything inherently new or different to the obvious realities, but whose determination serves to mimic are considered tracings. The differentiation becomes a case of the existing relying purely on the present tense (tracing), whereas the existing as a result of its past and its potential for its future crossing the boundaries of its temporal realities (Cosgrove, 1999). The knowledge of these findings open up the grounds for provocations that do not solely choose to contend with merely the 'here-and-now', but engage the multiple complexities of conceived space. It is within these concealed patterns of knowledge that mapping offers great opportunity to the design project. It is the bringing together of the normative physicality of space with the acts of will and restriction of history, politics and planning, sensual and spiritual experience that render a multitude of field conditions of the environment's surface appearance through its generative social and natural observations. The defiance in mapping when realized in its fullness ought to be the provocations of the design project as it seeks for the amplification of the supposed problem in the earliest conceptions of the invention – the design process (Corner, 1999).



Figure 47. Existing transportation Routes



Figure 48. Existing vegetation patterns. Drawing by Author

The 'layering' mapping technique draws on a multifaceted approach to design and inquisition. Its premise involves the individual reading and investigation of specific spatial elements of a particular environment that are later superimposed to produce a uniquely complex heterogeneous and thickened surface. Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas apply this to their respective competition design entries for the Parc de la Villette, Paris 1983. The overriding principle of planning involved the separation of a series of independently organized layers that would each individually represent its programmatic attributes and content. These contextual iterations were not seen to be specific readings of the existing conditions of site, but rather the implied intricacies of the required site program. As a generative consequence of the combined effects of scrutiny and the complexities of program specific data and technological requirements, an enabling geometry becomes apparent, free from the traditions of defined ordering principles or governing hierarchy at its core. Interpreted, therefore, as cohesive at each stratum yet removed from any other singular or collective, they represent a complex field of diverse elements manifesting within the whole. Traditionally speaking, the normative organizational attributes of planning is imbued with the assertion of control and order through predetermined notions of the intended program, whereas the open-endedness in layering intentionally seeks to reveal its capacity for a complex reading and opportunity to emerge from the act.





Figure 49. 'Layered' design mapping exercise, bringing together the temporal aspects of significant historical events experienced in this particular landscape, its relationship with the inhabitants, remnants of human habitation, and patterns of present day use. Model by Author



## PRECEDENT

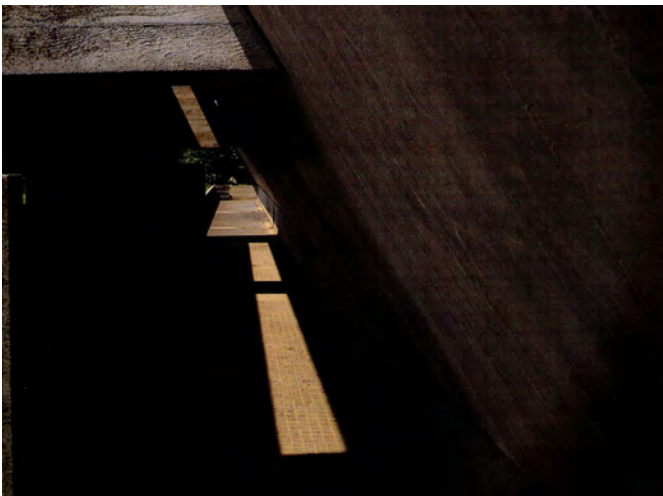
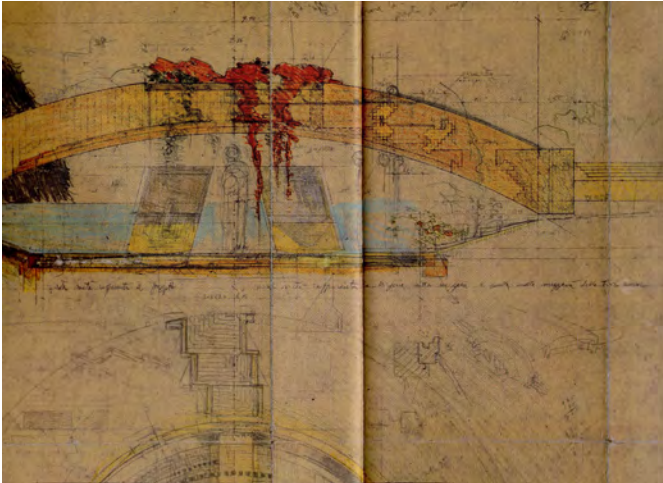


Figure 50. Design sketches by Carlo Scarpa for Brion Cemetery. Carlo Scarpa (N.D.) from the Book 'Carlo Scarpa' by Yutaka Saito 1997

Figure 51. Creative use of light, shadow and pathway. Yutaka Saito 1997

### Brion Cemetery, Carlo Scarpa

I believe it is mistaken to consider the Brion Cemetery the product of a wealthy capitalist. Rather it is quite the opposite. Of course I could have just made a large statue and left the rest lawn, but I enjoyed making things. (Saito & Scarpa, 1997)

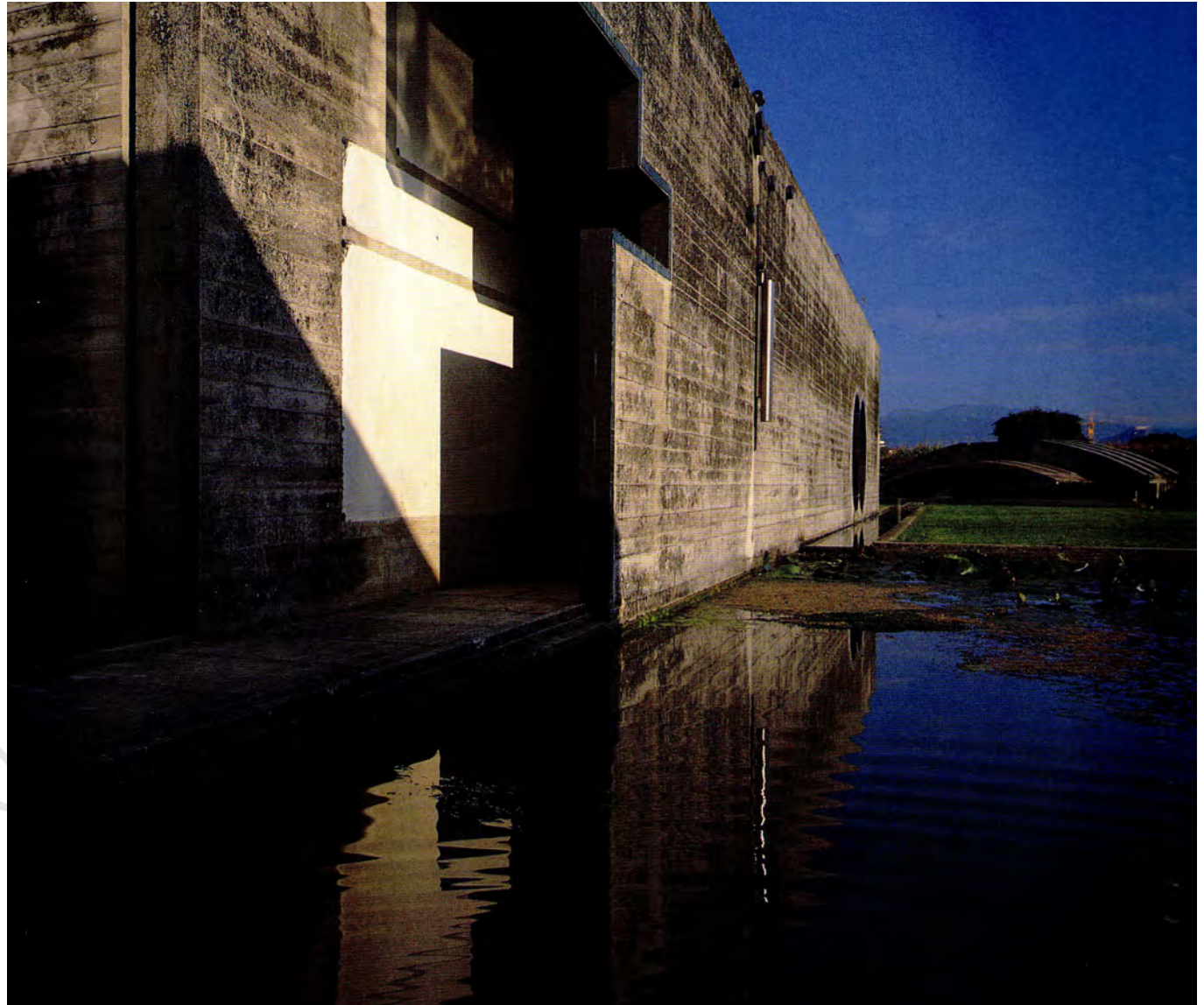
Conceived as a sacred space that challenges the cultural and spiritual norms of burial and commemoration, Scarpa was deliberate in developing an architecture that embraces both life and death in its temporality. He begins by questioning the relationship of death's sense of 'finality' and the continuation of life that precedes or seemingly, transcends it. Drawing on the spiritual references of the ancient Italian Christian perspective overlaid by the cosmic relationship observed in the traditions of Japanese landscape design – where in both instances, there is an acknowledgement of an afterlife beyond one's earthly passing – he concretizes these ideals into a space that is almost equally dynamic and transcendent. The Brion family's wishes called for a design responsive to the affections of visitors; a poetic gesture inclined to one's personal heartfelt repositories.

Beginning on a 68 square meter plot within the village cemetery that was later extended to 2,200 square meters, the site is composed as an L-shape flanking the remaining cemetery grounds. As a way of maintaining a sense of privacy and also limiting the visual connection to the surrounding village he walled the premises in and raised the ground level of the gardens by 700mm, but maintained natural ground level for the tombs, creating the appearance that they are in fact partially sunken into the earth. Scarpa's predisposition for the use of water in his design, however, not entirely fulfilled here, was intended to flow between the constellations of the various elements. The use of modulation, at various scales with an array elements and the treatment of planes are applied as a technique for differentiation – thresholds delineating one space from another; transitions via carefully constructed paths that engage the broader site; internal program as each of the specific elements perceive its surrounds; large scale planning to detail design – are brought together seamlessly into the final product. No internal electrical lighting was used in the buildings. Scarpa's attention to detail applies itself to the careful compositions of apertures within the monolithic mass of structure, allowing the variations of natural light throughout the day, and more over, from season to season, and the articulation of volumes to animate and accentuate the intricacies of the interior spaces.

With the interplay of cast concrete and the carefully crafted natural stone, the sense of permanence imbued the built form is intentionally offset against the softness of the natural elements introduced and

intended to further enhance the design throughout the passage of time. The treatment of surfaces are unapologetically exposed to the elements, permitting the effects of weathering and discolouration, but also the submission to nature's introduction of finer grains of life that inhabit it. This was not a chance encounter, but in fact present in the way in which he had envisaged the aging process within his earliest drawings. A further sense of poetry is invested into the design here where the 'never-ending circle of life and death that accompanies the turning of the seasons, slowly decaying, but at the same time purified by the forces of new life' (Saito, 1997).

**Figure 52. An effect of weightlessness demonstrated here by the way in which the concrete appears to float off the water's surface. Yutaka Saito 1997**





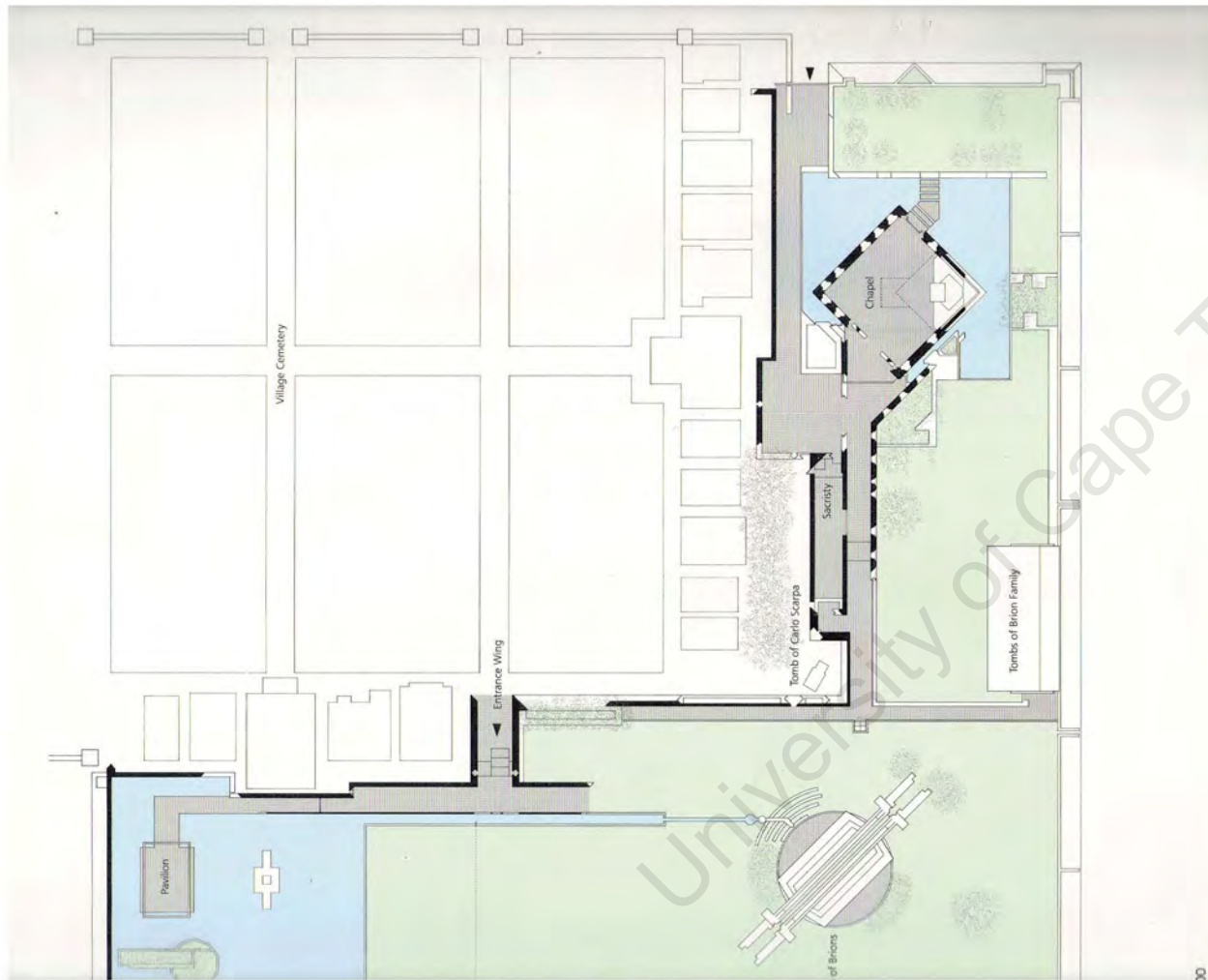


Figure 53. Floor Plan of the Cemetery. Yutaka Saito 1997



Figure 54. Conceptual intentions followed through across scale into design. Yutaka Saito 1997







### Path to the Acropolis, Dimitris Pikionis

The Athenian Acropolis represents a highly significant development of Western Civilization, and is certainly the most important assemblage of ancient Greek architecture and culture. With the site located in the city of Athens, considered to be the centre of the Hellenic world, the development of the complex demanded the commissioning of the most recognized artists and architects of their time to apply their trade. Over the centuries that followed, the structures and sculptures that adorned the landscape deteriorated with time, some of which no longer exist at all (Borngässer, 2010). Access from the city below was originally negotiated via a series of pathways that connected the interim interventions along the route to the summit. The pathway that had been upgraded during the early twentieth century existed, prior to Pikionis' appointment, as a decrepit tarred surface constructed in the utilitarian attitudes of industrialism. It was after the Greek Civil War that followed World War II, when the nationalistic Western supported government showed intent for re-establishing importance within ancient Greek classical traditions.

Pikionis' departure from the former tumultuous system that saw labouring visitors ascend the hillside ad nauseam, elected to find deliberate interruptions across scales along the journey in order to capture specific connections with the surrounding historical artefacts and city below, whilst simultaneously providing places of relief and enjoyment. As was the case with Carlo Scarpa, he had also showed interest in the meditative influences of Eastern landscape design early on in his career. In his design of a private home completed in 1949, the landscaping is organized as a space for worship with a monumental gate at its entrance. It comprised of a collection of indigenous plants orientated around the meandering pathways, which he had referenced in his later design of the Acropolis pathways.

The whole future course of Hellenism depends on our ability to assume a responsible position at the place where the East and the West meet. I will add this: it will also depend on the appropriate synthesis of opposed currents and tendencies, on their fusion into a new form (Pikionis, 1989)

The commission required a connecting route from the city leading between the monuments of the Acropolis and flanking Philopappou Hill, terminating at the Parthenon on the summit. Designed as a succession of terraces that ascend toward the theatre of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, the approach is at right angles to the path of Dionysiou Areopagitou, running from east to west along the southern edge of the Acropolis site. It links the streets of Leoforos Vasilissis Amalias and Apostolou Pavlou and is framed on either side by trees providing welcomed relief. Pikionis deliberately offsets his pathway from the symmetrical Odeon

Figure 55. Aerial Photograph versus sketch pattern of Pikionis' Acropolis pathways. Helene Binet, 1989

facade axis, emphasizing a unique perspective. His intentional screening of the views of the Parthenon along the route and momentary glimpses of the theatre facade is accomplished through selection and placement of trees in the landscape. Upon arrival 'the mass of the theatre and the distant image of the Parthenon are presented simultaneously in a choreographed sequence that collapses the time and distance between the two monuments' (Kehagias, ND).

As the pathway exits the theatre it decreases in scale and continues toward the summit. Obstacles presented in the form of boulders along the route are incorporated into the paving layout which at times intentionally expands to highlight significant moments in the landscape. With a rather unique sensibility, this somewhat inclusive attitude to the existing gives credit to Pikionis' design logic. His construction documentation was limited to very few drawings of the project, and decisively encouraged the intuitive response of the on-site craftsmen to interpret and manipulate details of the design as the landscape was encountered, ultimately and defining the realised path.

The only new building he designed as part of the scheme was a small pavilion and café at the church St Dimitris Loumbadiaris on Philoppapou Hill, which is where the landscaped sequence comes to an end,



Figure 56. Various paving patterns applied. Helene Binet, 1989

and provides an impressive view toward the Parthenon.

Pikionis synthesizes a Japanese sensibility for construction with the presence of the Acropolis. Here the simple trabeated structure is made from unprocessed local pine, carved on-site into rough columns. Like a Japanese temple, it is removed from the ground and rests on heavy stone blocks, so that the transition from the rock of the ground to the lightness of the timber structure above is emphasized. Pikionis' approach here draws directly from the Parthenon, whose stylobate is hewn from the rock of the Acropolis, in an equally sophisticated transition between ground and building. Nature is used to complement the composition; the selection of planting is as deliberate as that of building materials, and regional trees and shrubs were selected according to their geographic propriety, as well as their compositional potential. This approach led Pikionis to remove large numbers of cypress trees that competed with the columns of the various monuments on the Acropolis and diluted the powerful effect of their vertically. Standing on Philoppapou Hill, looking through Pikionis' pavilion to the Parthenon beyond, the radical idiosyncrasy of his work is made explicit in a single frame (Kehagias, ND).

Pikionis' efforts to mediate his perception of Eastern and Western responsiveness are relentless. The deliberate contrasts imbued in the juxtaposition of manicured elements against time-worn fragments in Chinese gardens are similarly consistent in his design. The distinctive character captured in the dappled shade of cypresses offset against the heavy masonry, or the scent 'of pine mingling with rosemary', harmonizes with the more prescribed parts of the scheme and the Acropolis, which enhances the sense of embodiment of place (ibid).

**Figure 57. Images both depict the careful attention to the existing conditions of the route. Helene Binet, 1989**





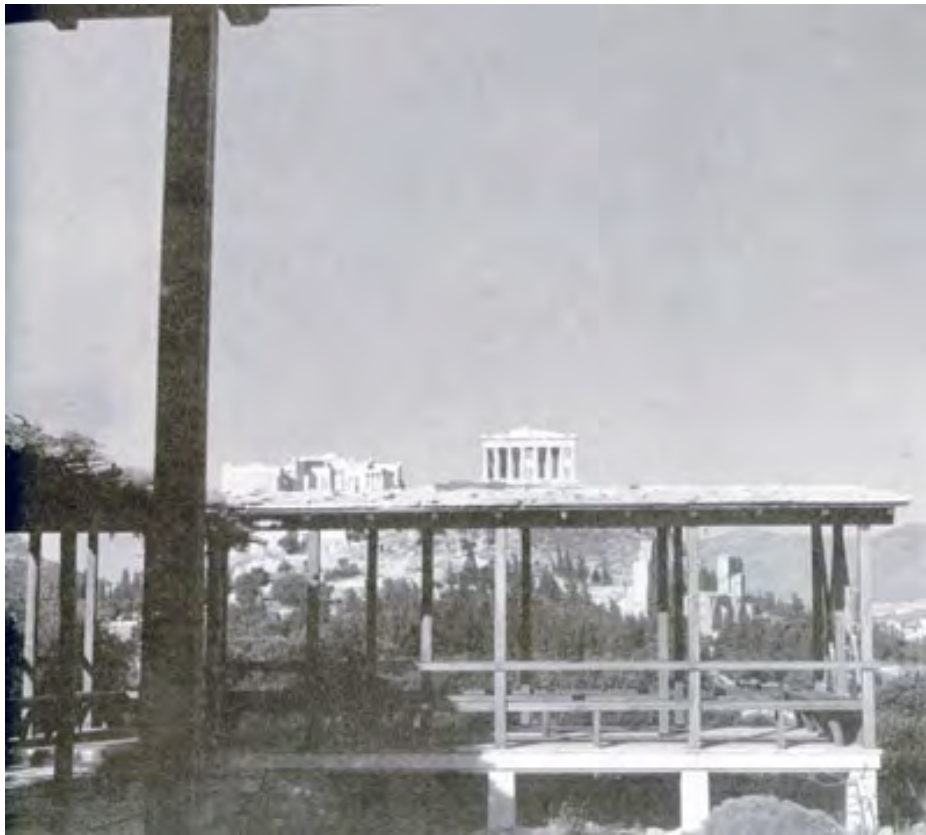


Figure 58. Photograph depicting the Acropolis as seen through Pikionis' pavilion cafe on Philopappou Hill. Helene Binet, 1989

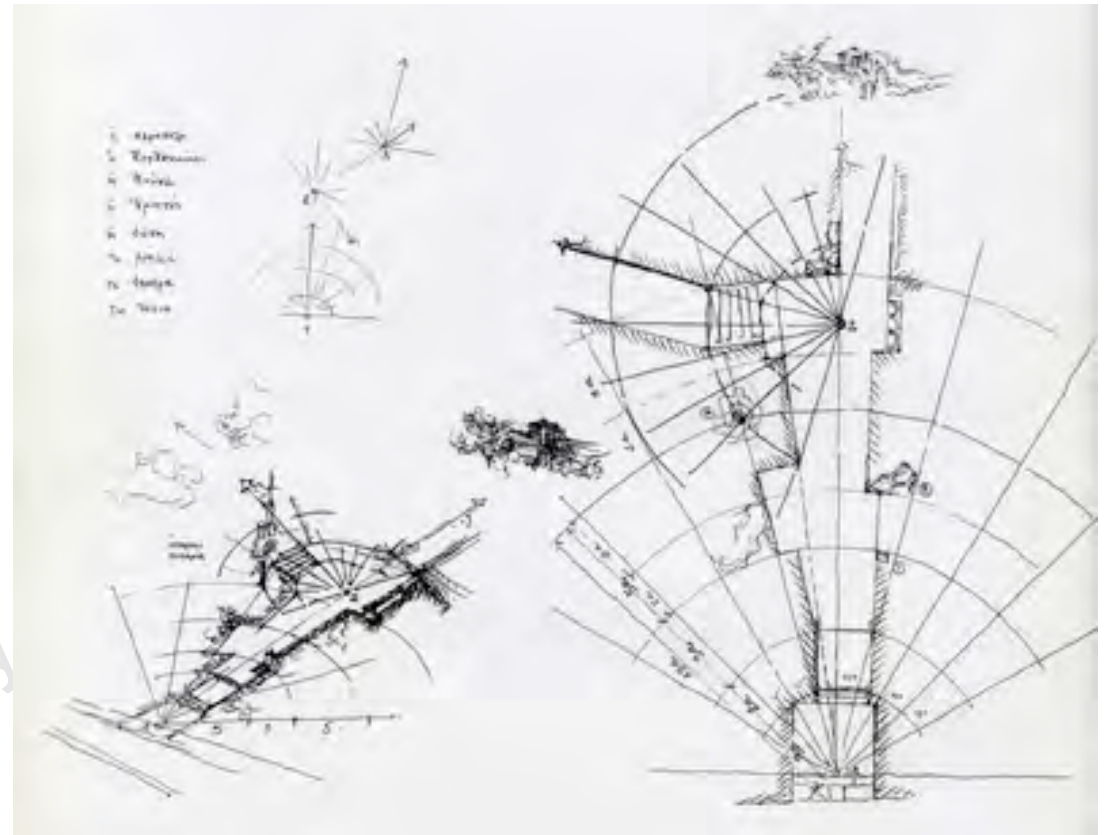


Figure 59. Sketch of Pikionis' analysis of sight lines from a particular point. Helene Binet, 1989



## DESIGN AGENDA

### What is? What isn't?

The process reading the history and interpreting the present state of the landscape sets up an opportunity for bringing together multiple strategies for development. Using the complex assembly mapped data, design approach brings together a challenging ambiguous relationship of landscape and building, historical and contemporary. The mapped data has already revealed an array of noteworthy historical informants to the design process, framing the key figures at work here. Hereby, specific connections never before inherently evident are revealed by the composite layering of information. This narrative assembly demonstrates the ability of their relative registrations to manifest new fictions from old facts. With artists such as a Winterbach and Laubscher already present at the farm, living firsthand what Higgens has demonstrated through her article, there springs an opportunity for a platform to be established around programs such as those aforementioned, which impart skills and knowledge across the board as a unique semi-urban-rural creative outpost. Conceptualizing an architectural response for an intervention at the site, navigates around the magazine building's position and relation to the surrounds. Located centrally within the farm and constructed with the associations of heavy masonry adorned in intricate plastered ornamentation of the British Empire, the magazine building is identified as the space designed for a gallery that serves a potential arts program for the farm.

As an extension, a broader architectural problem sees the existing Signal Hill Road spanning from Kloof Nek across the upper contours toward the hill summit and the invasive parking areas along this route as hugely problematic. An alternative solution is, thus, proposed to relieve the landscape of this intrusive presence. One of the successes of a proposal of this nature necessitates the need for a 'people mover' that extends access to as greater a variety of user, particularly those unable to ascend the slopes via the provided foot paths. A suitably sized overhead cableway gondola is introduced to the scheme, providing direct access to the summit from the city, reducing not only the vehicular traffic ascending toward Kloof Nek, but also permitting a greater degree of enjoyment and environmental sustainability by eliminating the intrusive effects of the motorway within the landscape. The lower gondola station is proposed on the outer eastern edge of the farm site. The poetic relationship with the narrative of Signal Hill would be the fact that the magazine was at the bottom end of historical pathways that lead to the summit from the city, as mentioned earlier. A proposal of this nature offers an opportunity to better integrate the farm with the public.





Figure 60. A series of landscape studies, illustrating the various interests in developing an attitude towards design in the landscape, based on the interpretation of narrative histories, precedent and personal predisposition. Models by Author



## Design Assemblage

The notion of curating the vast landscape with each of the related cultural nodes, becomes further focussed through the design of the summit – the ‘Acropolis’ if you will. The organization of program and space is ideated as a sequence of events, rather than simply an abstraction of built form – which delineates a careful assembly of components that mediate the user experience. These components are intentionally designed to capture the physical attributes of sensual, qualitative engagement with nature as is implied by the choice of materials and modes of construction. These components are described as follows:

- Path – envisioned in a manner similar to Pikionis’ ideas for the greater, the pathways existing and proposed, which ordinarily form part of Table Mountain Nature Reserves responsibility, could be worked closely to carefully negotiate this terrain. However, the design of these pathways in the broader landscape falls outside the scope of this thesis’ proposal. The pathways more intimately related the summit assemblage on the other hand, acts as a subtle gestures that gradually meander between spaces in the site, intended to bear similarity to the way in which Scarpa addresses the pathways at Brion. It is worth mentioning that the existing Signal Hill Road is intended to be maintained by the Nature Reserve with controlled access, but public access ought to be strictly prohibited.
- Screen – The screens are intended to define limit and direct circulation between various episodes on the site, whilst also creating a sense of enclosure and protection. In the design three separate screening elements are proposed. The first is located on the southern edge at the end of the path leading up from gondola station. Conceived as a soft planted hedge, this screen draws on the clues suggested by the site itself, limiting greener moist conditions to the southern edge. It is also intended to act as a wind break to the square proposed between the café pavilion and the amphitheatre. The second screen sits on the opposite end of the square on the north-western edge. A modular element, designed a light-weight cast polymer mechanically fixed to a steel structure acts as a break of the direct setting sunlight cutting across the amphitheatre, permitting dappled light to filter through. The final screen is located is designed to wrap across the face of the gallery which curates an exhibition of the historical narrative of the summit site and the surrounds. The footprint of the gallery itself follows the line of the natural contour, seeing the opportunity to recess the



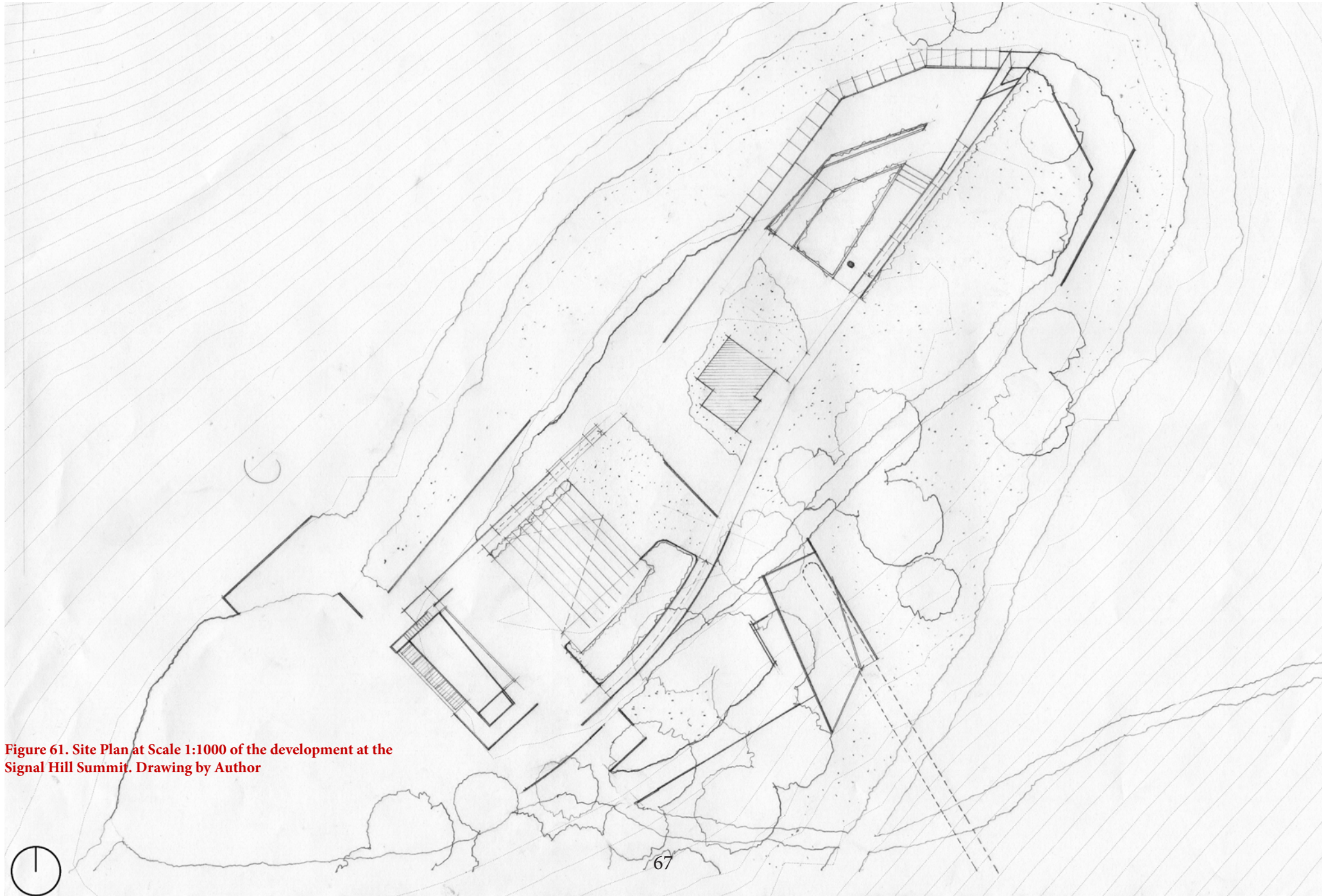


Figure 61. Site Plan at Scale 1:1000 of the development at the Signal Hill Summit. Drawing by Author



THE LION COUCHANT



Figure 62. Partial Floor Plan of the Cafe Pavillion and outdoor Amphitheatre Terrace. Drawing by Author





Figure 63. Partial Floor Plan of the Gallery. Drawing by Author

building bellow the summit itself. With only the northern to north western facade exposed to natural light, the gallery takes advantage of this location, framing momentary views across the wide panorama of Table Bay. The screen in this instance is intended to deflect the harsh daytime sunlight off the gallery, also covering a pathway that leads across the face of the gallery between the ends of the site itself. With a facade so visible from the city below, the screen is designed to be steel and timber framed copper cladded element that would be left to the process of weathering over time, rooting its presence on the site.

- Terrace – A series of terraces located at various points on the site are intended to capture specific moments. The outdoor amphitheatre itself is orientated toward Lion's Head and Table Mountain provides space to accommodate day to day public visitors but also has the potential of becoming a space to host outdoor events on occasion. The habitable roof plane of the gallery creates an edge to the summit, with a near 360 degree panorama on display. Other, more informal grassed terraces provide softer, more private alternatives for the public.
- Tower – The narrative history of the signalling mast has already been identified as a significant part of communication within military, maritime and public life. It is ironic that at the time its use depended on its ability to be visible from great distance. With the advancement of communication in the digital age, the mast has been replaced by and even bigger, more visible figure in the landscape, intended to be perceived as an invisible steel skeletal radio/satellite tower. Considering that this site remains a vital location for communication today, the tower is envisaged to be redesigned as a sculptural element forming part of the architectural design, rather than attempting to hide in plain sight. Its proposed position now hovers above the base remains of the mast, again making it a visible entity from the distance, whilst on site, marking the void of an artefact that was a key figure in the landscape.

## Material Matters

The call is for nothing less than a suspension of the epistemology of bifurcation by building on the strengths of archaeology as the “discipline of things” and its attendance to hybrid configurations (Olsen, 2007).

At each of the significant sites identified the remnants of decaying built and natural bits of matter imbues the memory of their respective origins. Their current state, weathered by the certainty of time suggests clues to potential future modes of construction, telling of the opportunities that exist within the manmade and natural. Alvar Aalto refers to this influence of materials and construction methods in architecture as the



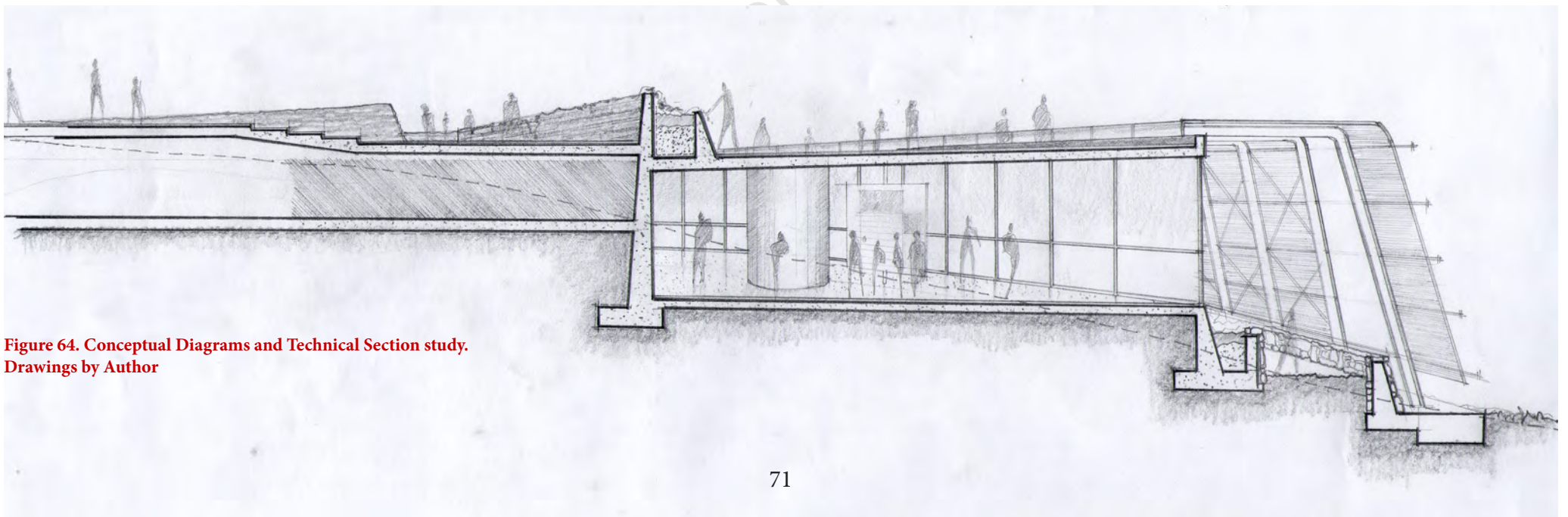
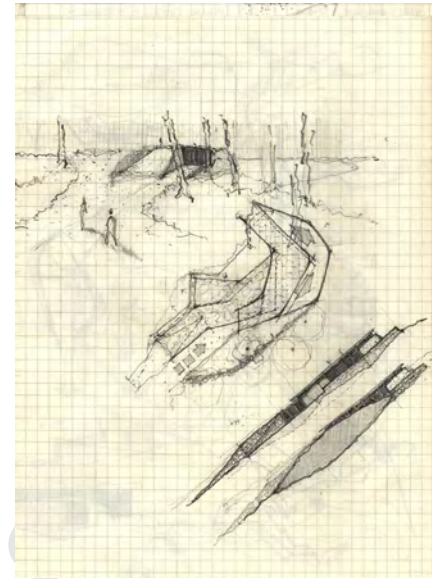
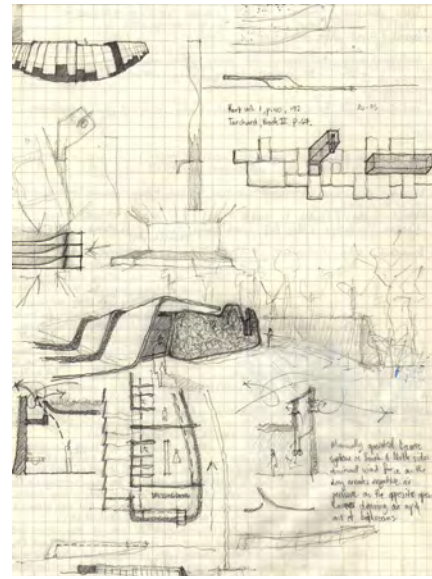
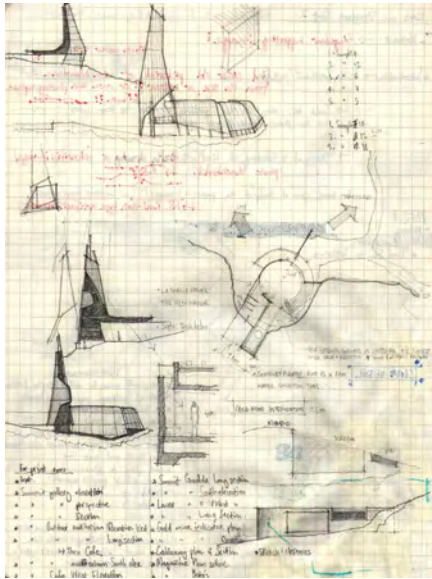
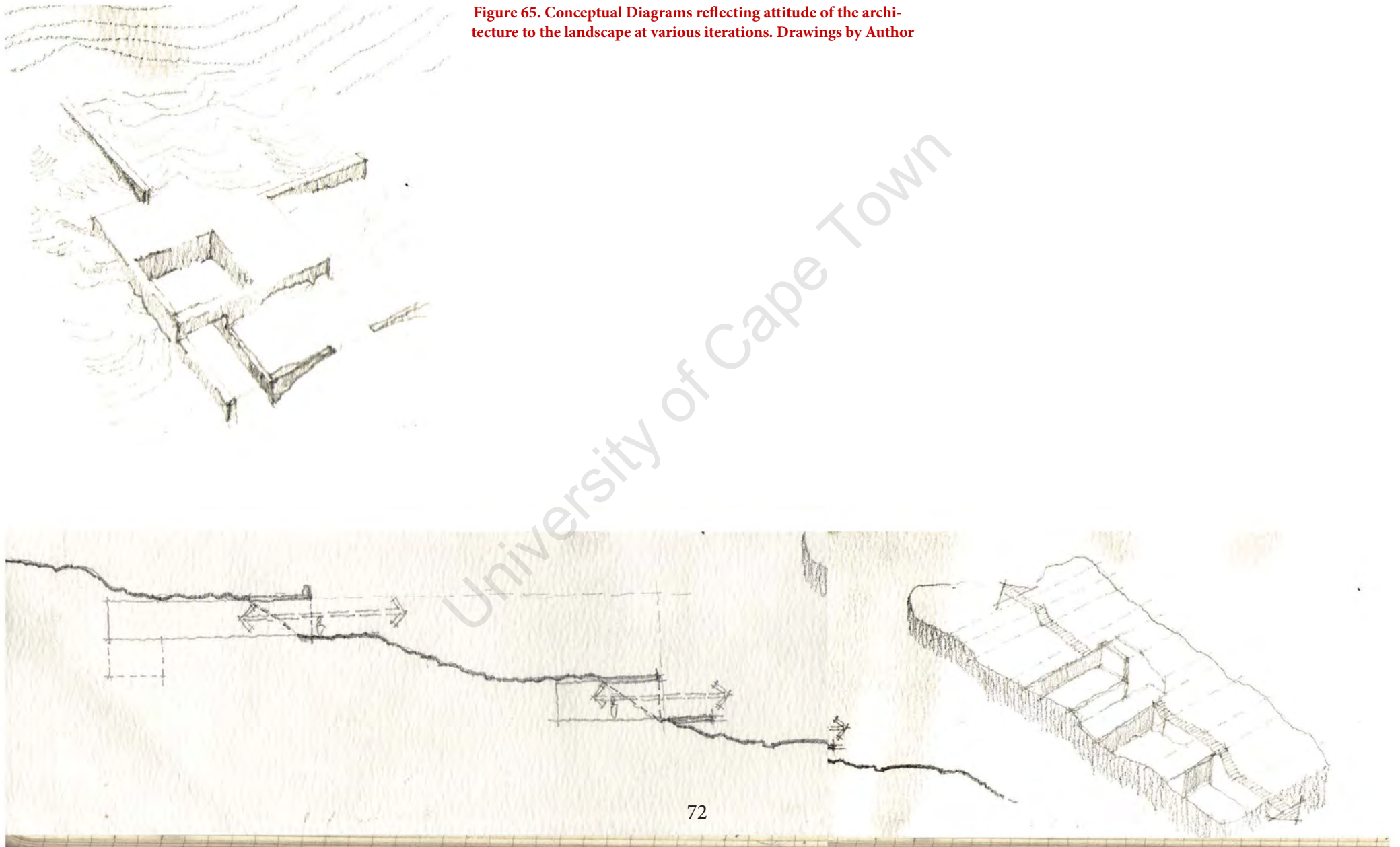


Figure 64. Conceptual Diagrams and Technical Section study.  
Drawings by Author

Figure 65. Conceptual Diagrams reflecting attitude of the architecture to the landscape at various iterations. Drawings by Author



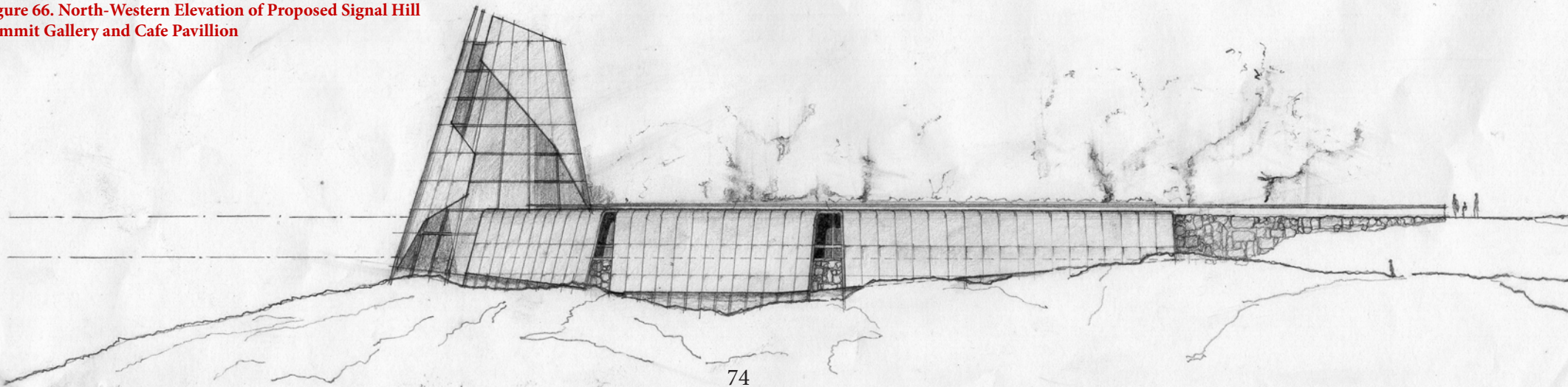


prospect of reading and understanding its 'curve'; implying that this temporal process may assist in reaching vital conclusions with regards to the architecture we envisage. (Aalto, 1978) The consequence of modern architecture, however, strives for the frozen moment of the architectural image and the abstraction of materiality to a sense of perfection that is both fleeting and timeless. Its supposed value is reinforced by the rigid accomplishment of geometric proportions and the conceptual ideology. In essence, the architecture is at its best on that very moment of completion, and is often portrayed that way when celebrated, promoting the false sense of its reality – without the presence of human life or character acknowledging its temporality. Pallasmaa suggests that true refinement of the profession lay in embracing the process of weathering and decay in order to familiarize the lived qualities of embodiment, sympathetic to the 'curve'. In this way the qualities of the built product are always understood to be in continuum, letting go of control of the idyllic image.

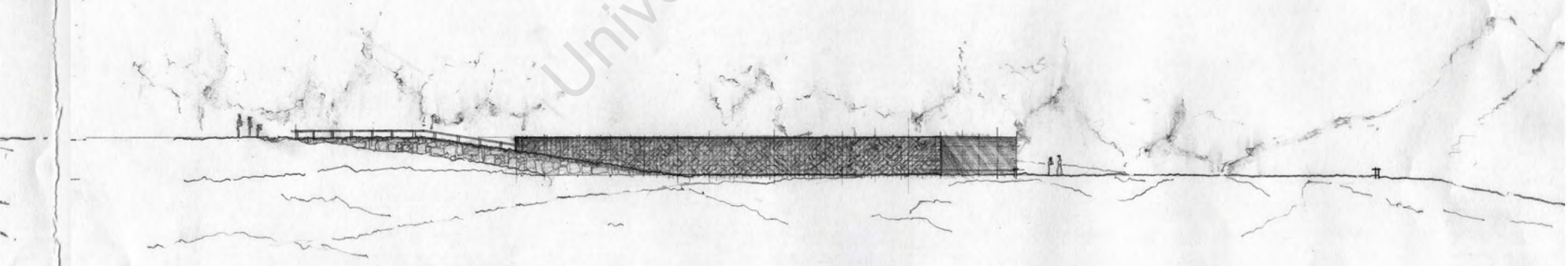
I had earlier referred to the character of the natural remnants of the gold mine. Similar illustrations of nature's evolutionary effects occur in part at the Signal Hill summit, where ruins of the former constructions remain indefinitely scattered. The old signal station remains now only as a mix of concrete, stone and brick foundation walls and part surface-bed, wildly overrun by vegetation. Further along, the trig beacon, signifying the highest natural point of that particular section of mountain stands as a corroded steel post and concrete base. The north east edge reveals the concrete and timber base of what used to be the signalling mast, presumably sawn off at the bottom. Other remaining artefacts are cubes of concrete, brick plinths and steel extrusions that seemingly grow out of the ground, bearing the effects of decay on their surfaces. It is unclear how the constellation of some of these elements made up the larger whole, especially as with the delaminating quarried rocks at the mine; they have become canvases that endure the effects of weathering, sustaining a newly adopted presence of natural plant and animal life. This places these manmade elements in direct relationship with the microcosms of nature at work. Where their original forms may have attempted to avoid this process through regular maintenance, their ruins suggest likely principals of design for future architectural interventions to subscribe to.



Figure 66. North-Western Elevation of Proposed Signal Hill Summit Gallery and Cafe Pavillion



University of Cape Town





## CONCLUSION

Looking back at the process of seeing this project unfold, it goes without saying that it has truly captured my imagination. Any preconceptions I may have had for this site had grown exceedingly beyond what I could have intuitively envisaged from the onset. Although it is true that the design proposal could have (during the course of the year, certainly has) diverted in so many different directions, addressing a plethora of inherently different natural, historical and social conditions, the ultimate return to the summit has homed my personal fascinations with the landscape to its very beginning. The credit to the final proposal represented in part in this dissertation, lay not in the final product, but rather in the process of reading and understanding place. Having literally spent hours immersed in the site at various points during the year, and finding connections back with the narrative histories, the design proposal sees many of these personal embodied experiences invested within. The theoretical investigations of landscape of memory and the engagement of the tactile sensibilities of place demand it, while the creative exploits of mapping has inspired a transformative way of

**Figure 67. Panoramic view across Table Bay as seen from the old Signalling Mast.**





## CONCLUSION

conceptualizing the very place one's attempting to interpret.

Nature is intended to play as big a role in providing a site as is in becoming part of the physical construct imbedded within the fabric of the design. The intention as an imagined built project would be to see the design only reach its full potential some years post occupation. When the process of weathering within the structures submits itself to the time-honoured effects of natural influences and harnesses the sense of rootedness to place, only then can design be fully understood. It is not to say that this is an attempt to control nature, as there will always remain a sense of certainty and uncertainty as to how this process could be negotiated, but rather it is about nurturing the productive tension that exists within the multilayered attributes at work here. It is less concerned with the focussed visual imagery of perfection, but rather, attempts to foreground human experience and perceptions whilst being inclusive of the presence of the ultimate stake holder – the natural landscape and the firefly.

